

HALESOWEN CHRONICLE



Thursday, January 22, 2015

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OSCAR TIP

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NEW ROLE

Maureen in classic comedy at The Rep



PAGE 25

Groups in opposition to EDL's protest

MORE than 100 people have signed a 'unity statement' calling upon the English Defence League (EDL) to stay away from Dudley.

Among those who have pledged their opposition to the EDL's protest are Dudley North Labour MP Ian Austin and Stourbridge Tory MP Margot James.

Others include The Rev Andrew Wickens from Top Church and Imam Hashmi from Dudley Central Mosque along with Dudley Council leader Pete Lowe.

It comes after Black Country Unite Against Fascism (UAF) announced it was organising a counter-demonstration in response to the EDL's planned march on the town centre on Saturday, February 7.

More than 700 supporters of the EDL are expected to show up in protest at a new mosque planned by Dudley Muslim Association.

The UAF says its members will assemble in Stone Street Square from 11am, and remain positioned in the town centre until the EDL leaves. It has the support of Dudley Trades Union Council and the Muslim community.

Statement signatories are 'deeply concerned' over the EDL Dudley demo, particularly after similar protests turned violent.

Two murder counts denied

AN 80-year-old Halesowen widow was allegedly beaten to death with a saucepan and her body hidden in her garage, Wolverhampton Crown Court heard this week.

Leo Barnes, aged 33, of Runcorn Road, Balsall Heath, denies killing Mrs Cynthia Beamond at her home on June 27.

Barnes also denies murdering 67-year-old Philip Silverstone with a car jack at his London home the following day.

• Court case — page 3

MOVE TO FREEZE COUNCIL RENTS

A deadly haul of weapons put in bins

A TERRIFYING array of deadly weapons have been taken off the streets in Birmingham and the Black Country.

More than 150 knives, guns and knuckledusters have been retrieved by police with bins provided by the Word4Weapons charity.

They were all handed in at bins provided by the charity in Edgbaston, Sparkbrook, Hockley, Lozells, Erdington and Wolverhampton, and now a further bin is to be placed in Aston.

The Edgbaston bin was unveiled in July by the parents of teenager Christina Edkins, Kathleen and Jason, near to where the 16-year-old Halesowen schoolgirl was killed in March 2013.

The teenager was fatally stabbed as she sat on a bus while travelling to Leasowes High School. Christina was attacked by paranoid schizophrenic Phillip Simelane, 23, from Walsall, who was later detained indefinitely under the Mental Health Act.

West Midlands Police and Crime Commissioner David Jamieson said: "The bins have given people a place to off-load items which could have destroyed lives."

Christina's mother Kathleen Harris said: "If only one knife was put in the bin, it would potentially be a life saver."

Pub plans to be discussed

CAMPAIGNERS who won a bid to stop plans for a convenience store on a pub car park are holding a public meeting.

New River Retail's £1 million plan for a Co-Operative store next to the Haden Cross Inn in Cradley Heath, was rejected by Sandwell Council.

Friends of Haden Cross Inn have vowed to continue to protect the pub and will discuss plans at the pub in Halesowen Road on February 10, 7.30pm.

Bikers ride again for Brandon's charity



Brandon Carter, from Halesowen, who died in May, will be in the minds of bikers on Sunday's cancer charity run

IT was a rally held to make cancer sufferer Brandon Carter's wish come true.

The consultation continues until Sunday.

Meanwhile, rent for council homes in Sandwell is due to rise from April as councillors strive to find extra cash to fund investment in its properties.

Leaders at Sandwell Council were set to rubber-stamp the decision this week, which will see the average rent increase by £1.03 to £88.92 per week.

The plans will go before the cabinet's meeting on February 11. The move goes against a formula which calculates that the council could increase rents by up to three per cent.

His uncle David Brenton said: "Brandon was a big film buff. When he was a kid he saw The Terminator in which Arnold Schwarzenegger rides a Harley Fat Boy and he said he would love to ride a Harley Davidson."

"And when he was first diagnosed he said again that he would love to ride one."

Mission

His family made it their mission to give him his wish and through biker friends managed to organise the event.

But it still came as a surprise when 400 bikes descended on Streetbike in Dudley Road, Halesowen, at 11am.



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Fear that taxi move would hit business

A TAXI drivers' group fear their business will be hit if councillors bring in a ban on booking agents operating outside town centre venues.

Some private hire taxi firms in Dudley have been employing the agents, who stand outside pubs and clubs.

But police say the practice cannot continue and rivalry between two firms has sparked a criminal investigation.

The agents are not allowed to 'tout' for business by approaching potential customers, the customers must approach them. But other firms and some hackney carriage drivers claim the move puts them at a disadvantage and have urged Dudley Council to intervene.

At last week's taxi committee council officers tabled options to ban the practice in Dudley town centre or right across the borough.

Dudley Private Hire and Taxi Association chairman Shaz Saleem urged the committee to think again. He said: "Businesses are struggling out there. They are thinking of new initiatives to take their business forward. This is one of these initiatives."

The committee voted to defer their decision.

Drink-drive figures drop

THE number of drink-drivers caught by West Midlands Police over Christmas was down by more than a third on the previous year.

Only 11 per cent of the more than 2,000 motorists breathalysed throughout December were over the legal alcohol limit.

The figures relate to the initial test drivers take after being stopped. A total of 2,080 people were checked by officers and 225 of those — 77 had been involved in an accident — provided a positive result on first test or failed to provide a sample, 138 less than a year before.

Huge graffiti bill

SANDWELL Council has shell out £200,000 of taxpayers' money ridding the area of graffiti over the past two years, it has been revealed.

Deputy council leader Councillor Steve Eling said he would rather the cash was put to better use.

All we ever wanted was to start a family



Heartbroken — Kate and Steve Edwards

WHAT Kate and Steve Edwards want more than anything in the world is to start a family together but a postcode lottery on fertility treatment is preventing them.

The couple, both aged 35, say they have been blocked from seeking further help through in vitro fertilisation (IVF) treatment due to the policy of one Black Country health body. While clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) across Sandwell, Walsall, Wolverhampton, Birmingham and Solihull have come together to create a single assisted conception policy which includes the funding of IVF, Dudley CCG has not signed up to this joint policy.

Mrs Edwards grew up in Dudley and her husband Steven moved to the town from Wolverhampton when they set up home.

Mrs Edwards said: "It is ironic that if I had moved to where my husband is from then we wouldn't have faced this problem."

Mrs Edwards suffered two miscarriages and subsequent use of fertility drugs has proved unsuccessful.

Dudley CCG states if couples have been infertile for a minimum of three years they can apply for one course of IVF funding. But if a couple miscarries they deem that they can conceive naturally and therefore reset the three-year time limit.

"It has left me heartbroken as we've been through so much," said Mrs Edwards, who lives in Lower Gornal and works in marketing. The couple wed at Himley Hall in 2009.

Around 100 applications for IVF funding are received by Dudley CCG each year. Of these, around half are approved. Officials said they are aware different CCGs apply their own criteria for deciding on funding saying some do not fund IVF at all.

In a statement the trust said: "We want to ensure that funding is not used for unnecessary treatment. We believe that sufficient time should be allowed for natural conception to occur."

Jury told that Cynthia was murdered with a saucepan

By Dominic Bareham

A GRANDMOTHER'S battered body was found at her home after concerns were raised when she failed to return calls and her curtains were closed, a court heard.

The family of 80-year-old widow Cynthia Beamond had been unable to contact her by phone so sent one of her neighbours in Juliet Road, Halesowen, to try to summon her but there was no sign of the pensioner, a jury was told. Her body was later found in the garage of her home.

Stephen Linehan QC, prosecuting, read a statement from Beverley Hadley, Mrs Beamond's daughter, at Wolverhampton Crown Court in which she said the neighbour had found the curtains drawn, but they knew her mother never pulled them together.

She said: "My neighbour called the police to report mum missing because it was so out of character for her not to be at home and not to answer her calls and texts."

"She also told me all the curtains and blinds were pulled in the house, but mum can't reach the blinds in the kitchen and never closed the dining room curtains."

Leo Barnes, aged 33, of Runcorn Road, Balsall Heath, Birmingham, is accused of killing Mrs Beamond with a saucepan at her home on June 27, before allegedly murdering 67-year-old Philip Silverstone with a car jack at his home in Belsize Park, London, the next day.

Visited

Mrs Hadley revealed her mother had been friendly with Barnes' mother Susan, who used to live near her many years ago. Barnes' mother died when he was a child and he went to live with his grandparents. He remained familiar to Mrs Beamond and visited her when aged in his 20s.

On the morning of June 27, the day of her alleged murder, Barnes had been driving a hired Volkswagen Golf in the area. Mrs Beamond was last seen talking to a doorstop salesman in the morning by a neighbour. She had been due to visit a friend afterwards but did not arrive or answer her phone.



Widow Cynthia Beamond, 80, was found dead in the garage of her home

Mr Linehan said: "The reason Mrs Beamond didn't go to her friend's home that day and the reason that she didn't answer her phone was shortly after that salesman left that front door, this man attacked her and killed her in her own home."

He said afterwards Barnes had closed the curtains in every room in a bid to clean up what he had done and search the property for anything valuable he could steal.

The court heard that he had driven away in the pensioner's Vauxhall Astra because he intended to sell it and left it nearby so that he could go back for it later. He had recruited someone to pick up the car before asking her to help him put it up for sale via website Gumtree.

He also allegedly stole Mrs Beamond's television, sat nav and jewellery which he sold to pawnbrokers.

Mrs Beamond's handbag was found discarded in a bin.

The court heard evidence from pathologist Dr Nicholas Hunt, who revealed the severity of Mrs Beamond's injuries. These included fractures to the base of the skull, the left cheekbone, temple and the top of the head.

Dr Hunt said she had died as a result of the multiple head injuries, which appeared to have been caused by a 'blunt object', claimed to be a saucepan.

He added it was possible Mrs Beamond could have survived for 35 minutes after the injuries were inflicted, though she was likely to have been unconscious.

On June 28, automatic number plate recognition cameras pictured Barnes while he was driving to Belsize Park, London. There he visited Mr Silverstone who lived in a flat

with his 86-year-old wife who suffered severe dementia. Barnes had lived next door to the couple in the past.

Mr Linehan said Barnes attacked Mr Silverstone, who bled to death after being left with multiple wounds and lacerations.

Barnes refused to answer any questions but told police that he went to see Mr Silverstone to buy DVDs and alleged his wife had attacked him.

Catherine King, a forensic scientist with the Met Police who investigated Mr Silverstone's death, said she had found Barnes' fingerprint in a blood stain on the inside wall of his home. Other blood stains around the home contained Mr Silverstone's DNA.

Barnes denies two counts of murder, claiming that someone else carried out the killings.

The trial continues.



Leo Barnes, aged 33, denies two counts of murder

NEWS IN BRIEF

Musical duo aim for more success

TWO musicians representing the Black Country have made it to the finals of the national Open Mic competition.

Brett Huckfield, aged 46, of Oldbury, and Marie Timmins, 37, from Pennsnett, won both the area and regional heats of the competition and aiming to win the final at the NEC on Saturday.

The pair, who have been performing professionally together for 12 months, said they feel the Black Country is under-represented on the national stage and want to change that.

Kitchens revamp across boroughs

A £1.4 million project to refurbish homes across Dudley and Sandwell has been completed.

Outdated kitchens at 500 properties have been replaced by Wates Living Space and the Black Country Housing Group.

Work on the revamp programme has been carried out during the past five years. Jackie O'Callaghan, head of property services at Black Country Housing Group, said: "We have an ongoing programme of improvements."

Jobs fair at army reserve centre

A BLACK Country Jobs and Careers Fair is being held in Dudley today (Thursday).

The event, which will feature up to 25 local and national employers, is taking place in Dudley Army Reserve Centre in Vicar Street from 10am to 3pm.

There will also be Armed Forces recruiters taking part.

To find out more call (01384) 230166.

Drama double bill at the Glasshouse

EVA McIntyre of Greenblade Theatre will perform Mind Your Head and Pericles Theatre stage Woman on February 6 in a double bill of drama at Ambroote.

The performances from 7.30pm explore the impact of religion and the lives of heroic women. They are at Glasshouse Arts Centre in Wollaston Road. For tickets call (01384) 399430.

New council chief

THE new chief executive of Dudley Council has begun work after taking over the £165,000 a year role. Sarah Norman, 52, replaces John Polychanakis who stepped down after almost 40 years in local government.

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THE BEST OF PETER RHODES



CARE to guess what happened when an American man surprised his wife with breakfast in bed, accidentally setting off the burglar alarm at their North Carolina home? No prizes. Tiffany Segale, 27, shot him through the closed bedroom door. Thankfully, he was not seriously hurt. So that's Eggs American-style. Sunny side up with extra lead.

THIS week University College London claimed that by the year 2050 cancer will rarely kill anyone under 80. All I can add is that in 45 years in journalism I cannot remember a time when a cure for cancer was not just around the corner.

SORRY, folks, but after much consideration, Je ne suis pas Charlie. I will march against terrorism. I will march in sorrow and solidarity with the bereaved. I will march in rage and despair at the premeditated slaughter of fellow journalists. But I will not march to defend the absolute right to freedom of expression. There is no such right, and nor should there be.

AS the death of Sir Jack Hayward was announced, Julia Bradbury was exploring Brunel's magnificent Victorian steam ship SS Great Britain in *The Wonder of Britain* (ITV). Pity she didn't explain why the ship is displayed in glory in Bristol rather than rotting away in the Falkland Islands, as it was for many sorry years. SS Great Britain was saved solely because in 1970 Sir Jack personally paid £150,000 for the hulk to be towed 8,000 miles back to Bristol. Didn't that deserve just a little mention?

DIDN'T Tony Blair look old, ragged and in need of a decent night's sleep during his appearance before a Commons committee? Maybe he's worried about the soon-to-be-published Chilcot inquiry (11 bloody years after the event) into the 2003 invasion of Iraq. Don't you hope so?

MEANWHILE, Fiona Bruce breathlessly assures us on BBC News that France's decision to put 15,000 squaddies on the streets is "the biggest ever deployment of troops in France." Does nobody do history any more?

Don't miss Peter Rhodes every Monday to Friday in your Express & Star

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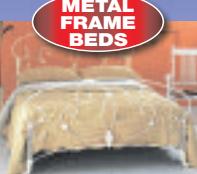
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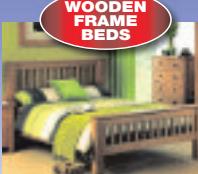
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3 FLOORS OF
 FAMOUS NAMES



Homeless families sent to Black Country

LONDON is sending its homeless families to the Black Country, as it costs too much to find them housing in the capital.

Wandsworth Council has been condemned by Sandwell Council leader Darren Cooper for treating people 'like cattle' and moving them around the country to cut costs. There are 17 displaced families from London living in Sandwell. They have been sent from such London boroughs as Brent, Newham and Hammersmith and Fulham.

By Daniel Wainwright

wrong. This vindicates what we were trying to do with our residency test.

"We have to be able to support the people who are already here. We can't have more being dumped from other areas when it is their own councils that should be supporting them."

West Bromwich East MP Tom Watson said: "The Government says that their 'benefit cap' is driving down the social security security bill.

"It might be in rich London boroughs but the opposite is true in the West Midlands.

"They are driving out the poor from inner London and forcing them into boroughs like Sandwell."

"It's not fair on the poor people they drive out and it's certainly not fair on local people in West Bromwich and beyond."

Love is in the air at Himley Hall



Laura Eagles and Adam Davies planning their big day

COUPLES planning to tie the knot got the chance to tour historic Himley Hall, which holds civil wedding and partnership ceremonies.

They saw the venue's refurbished art-deco style North Wing, which once housed the Earl of Dudley's swimming pool and cinema. Wedding co-ordinators and catering team were on hand to answer questions.

Registrars from the Staffordshire Registration Service also guided couples through the civil ceremony process during the open day on Sunday, attended by around 100 couples.

Question

Among them were Laura Eagles, from West Bromwich, and Adam Davies, of Stallings Lane, Kingswinford. Mr Davies, 22, a Dudley Council worker, popped the question on Christmas Day.

The couple have now started planning for their big day to be held in 2017. Mr Davies and Miss Eagles, a retail supervisor from Great Bridge, have been together for five years.

Weather watch so residents prepare

A WEBSITE has been launched by a council to give residents updates on gritting routes, bin collections and other services that could be hit by bad weather.

Dudley Council's Weather Watch page includes gritting runs and routes and grit bin locations, along with school closures, bin collections and advice on keeping warm during the winter.

Residents will be able to get the latest updates via the council's e-bulletin and also social media sites Twitter and Facebook.

Council leader Pete Lowe said: "As part of our pledge to be community council we are keeping people informed and up to date is an essential part of our work during the winter.

Plan

"The more information people have on things like roads and gritting, the better they can plan their journeys over the winter period."

The gritting team, based at the Lister Road depot, will cover almost 300 miles of roads and has stockpiles of some 6,500 tonnes of salt.

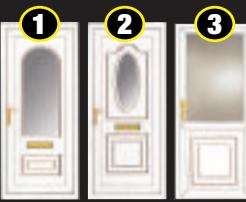
Last winter Dudley gritters went out 34 times, using a total of 2,000 tonnes of grit.

The council's weather watch page can be found at the www.dudley.gov.uk website.

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PM points to jobs in the Black Country

PRIME Minister David Cameron has said falling unemployment rates under his Government are evident in the Black Country.

Mr Cameron said the recovery was 'gathering pace' and that more young people were being given the chance of a 'better future'.

The PM was speaking in the House of Commons after Tory MP for Halesowen and Rowley Regis James Morris asked him if we would congratulate young people in the area who had managed to secure work.

Mr Cameron said: "In my constituency, nearly 4,000 people have begun an apprenticeship since 2010 and the claimant count there is down 42 per cent since the election.

Recovery

"The long-term youth claimant count—that should be of the greatest concern to us, because that is young people on unemployment benefit month after month—is down by 58 per cent in the last year alone.

"This recovery is gathering pace and is providing jobs for people, and each one of those jobs is the chance for them to provide a better future for their families.

"But we must stick to the plan and a key part of the plan is getting the deficit down."

A FORMER care home will be demolished and replaced with a £5 million complex for older people, creating 42 jobs, under newly submitted plans.

Shenstone Care Home in Kent Road in Halesowen was closed by Dudley Council three years ago because it was considered not fit for purpose.

All 31 residents were moved and 51 staff members redeployed within the council's care service.

Now, Black Country Housing Group has unveiled plans to demolish the 1960s 44-bed building and build a three-storey 66-bed care home. This would include a number of rooms adapted for people living with dementia and six bungalows for independent living.

Robyn Webster, spokesman for Black Country Housing Group, said: "Dudley Council has expressed that there is a need for high-quality dementia care in the borough

Sheltered

Black Country Housing Group has a strong record of delivering these services in Dudley and operates six sheltered schemes.

It also manages the supported living services for people with learning disabilities to a very high standard.

"It is now committed to increasing care provision in the borough by developing

the Shenstone scheme. Although the Shenstone site includes a 44-bed care home, this has not been in use for a number of years.

Black Country Housing Group is proposing to demolish the existing building and build a new 66-bed state-of-the-art facility which will replace the current structure."

The bungalows will be for people aged over 55 and will be a mix of two and three-bedroom homes. The care home will have a 24-hour surveillance team.

It will create 42 jobs, including 22 care workers.

Halesowen ward Councillor Alan Taylor said: "This will regenerate the area."

New Bradley Hall in Kingswinford is the only care home still in the hands of Dudley Council, but is in the process of being transferred to Black Country Housing Group.

While fans in the Steve Bull stand helped to create a mosaic spelling out

thousands of fans put their 'thumbs up' for Sir Jack Hayward as they paid tribute to the former Wolves owner at a packed Molineux.

Chants of 'he's one of our own' echoed around the ground.

Before kick-off, the crowd of 28,132 were on their feet for a minute's applause which finished with 200 gold and black balloons along with 91 Union flag balloons being released.

Both captains, Wolves' Danny Bath and Blackpool's Tony McMahon, car-

Sir Jack as they held up gold and black cards.

Sir Jack's son Jonathan, long-time companion Patti Bloom and friend Rachael Heyhoe Flint were joined on the pitch for the emotional tribute by Wolves owner Steve Morgan and chief executive Jez Moxey as well as a host of former managers and players including Ron Flowers, Steve Bull and Jody Craddock.

Both captains, Wolves' Danny Bath and Blackpool's Tony McMahon, car-

ried out wreaths which were placed behind each goal.

Eight thousand copies of a special 100-page match day programme were quickly snapped up before 3pm.

The club will be doing another print run to ensure fans who missed out on Saturday will get the chance to buy a copy.

Sir Jack's funeral will take place on February 3 at St Peter's Collegiate Church in Wolverhampton. Sir Jack died in Fort Lauderdale, Florida.

NEWS IN BRIEF

New venue in city for stage company

BIRMINGHAM Stage Company is to move to a new home in the city.

Performers have taken their final bow at The Old Rep, where it has been the resident professional company since 1992, and be moving a short distance to The New Alexandra Theatre.

Manager Neal Foster said the company had grown out of The Old Rep and needed more space for its shows.

"It has become obvious that we need a bigger stage for our shows but we have been reluctant to leave the Old Rep in case it jeopardised the venue's situation."

"Now the theatre is in the wonderfully safe hands of Birmingham Ormiston Academy, we can leave the building knowing it has a bright future ahead of it."

Ready for Action Heart five mile run

HUNDREDS of runners are expected to take part in the 25th anniversary of an annual five-mile run starting at a Dudley hospital.

The Action Heart event begins at Russells Hall in Dudley on February 22 at 9.30am.

Money raised goes to the Action Heart charity, which is based at the hospital. Each year around 500 people take part in the event, which is open to runners of all abilities.

Entries cost between £11 and £13 and must be booked.

Visit www.actionheartrunning.com for details.

Funeral date for saviour of Wolves



Wolves fans held cards up to spell out their respect for Sir Jack Hayward at Molineux on Saturday

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By any measure, it's a big statement, but his practice is well placed to make such claims with some 3,500 patients on the books and an ever-growing portfolio of happy clinical outcomes.

The clinic's prosthetics, prescribed and crafted on premises at his multi-disciplined dental practice in Dudley have found satisfied patients from as far away as Spain and Portugal.

Others wishing to resolve long-term denture issues have travelled from Dorset, the Isle of Anglesey, the Isle of Skye and London.

Over the last decade the Denture Clinic, based in North Street, has encountered some heart-rending accounts of how ill-fitting teeth have dislocated lives "but thankfully it has never failed to deliver a successful clinical solution," says principal Steven Burchell DipCDT RCS(Eng) GDC 108353.

"Prosthetics have been the butt of every

comedian's joke, but things are changing. There's no reason for anyone to put up with uncomfortable and unsightly dentures any more and talking about them is getting easier.

"It wasn't that long ago that an amalgamation between glamour and dentures was unheard of, but these unlikely descriptive bedfellows are now increasingly being fused together at our clinics in Dudley, Wolverhampton, Kidderminster and Dorridge," adds Steven.

Youthful, engaging smile

Evangelical about what new-generation denture prescriptions can achieve, Steven adds: "Dentures have traditionally never been associated with cosmetic makeovers, but our high-quality prosthetics have quite literally taken years off some of our patients, reshaping sunken cheeks and pinched lips."

The palette of solutions to deliver a more youthful, engaging smile has never been so great, with traditional, handmade-on-the-premises

prosthetics; suction diaphragm dentures; and implant-retained over-dentures.

"We have often been privileged to transform looks – and lives – providing teeth that not only are aesthetically pleasing and hugely functional, but successfully support facial structures just like real teeth.

"Can dentures ever be glamorous? Emphatically, yes," he says.

Strident advances in technology, improved materials and revised clinical procedures are all helping to "drive the denture revolution forward and it's easy to add a real sense of natural-looking glamour to a clinical outcomes," he says.

By far the most sustainable and predictable results are found in implant-retained overdentures, where permanently fixed implanted 'studs' in the jaw secure the prosthetic.

"For those with the right bone density, overdentures guarantee stability," adds Steven.

Implants, however, are not suitable for all and a cutting-edge suction valve device that holds prosthetics in position is another popular option.

Infectious laughter, happy moments and "me" time meet Denture Clinic implant patients John and Gillian. Both were prescribed implant retained over-dentures

With the Ultra Suction system a clever diaphragm principle, triggered by bite pressure on patients' gums, creates a 'sucking' vacuum between the soft-tissue mouth lining and the prosthetic.

"The device can be mounted on upper or lower teeth and because of its efficiency allows us to consider a reduction in the size of the acrylic 'plate' which can result in improved speech and taste.

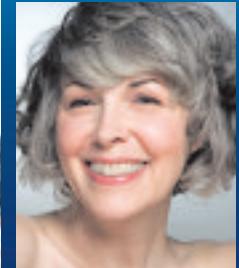
Fastidious about quality

"For the right patient it can deliver excellent denture retainer qualities without the invasive procedures required for implant work, he adds."

Quality, handcrafted traditional dentures remain hugely popular. "Our on-premises manufacturing allows us to be fastidious about quality. We use only the best of materials and we have a mature, skilled team of technicians that supports us.

"The possibilities with good looking, functional prosthetics still continue to surprise us," says Steven.

Solutions at a glance



Traditional dentures



Implant dentures



Suction solution

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IN MY VIEW

with Mark Andrews

A SIGN on the door to our print works bears the warning that 'ear protection must be worn when the presses are running'. Always one to comply with such rulings, I diligently looked through the window, saw that the presses were idle and that the hall was empty, apart from a man with a broom. Deciding that ear protection was not necessary, I ventured into the room where country and western music was playing. Definitely an earplugs day.

■■■■■

LOOK, I confess I am not a regular bus traveller. I occasionally hop onto one after a night out in town, or on the way back from the garage when I drop the car in for a service, but there are plenty of people better qualified to comment on their merits than myself.

But when I heard National Express's justification for hiking up its fares at a time of falling fuel prices, my jaw dropped.

Normally, they blame rising fuel costs when they put the fares up, but this year, faced with a 20 per cent fall in the cost of diesel, they have had to try a different tack. So this year the 4.8 per cent increase is justified by the fact that the company is investing in some shiny new buses to make for a more pleasant passenger experience. Drivers will also be getting some smart uniforms to add to the feeling of wellbeing.

But really, who actually gets onto a bus for the enjoyment of it? Even in the days of the much-maligned Banga buses, I don't suppose anybody saw one arrive at the bus stop and think, 'you know what, I'll wait another 20 minutes in case the next one has plusher upholstery?'

Whenever I board a bus, the main considerations are where it goes from, where it goes to, how long I will have to wait, and how quickly it will get me back. And yes, how much it costs. Because when it is £2.20 to go a couple of miles, and there's a group of you, a taxi suddenly sounds much better value.

It's the same with the shiny new bus station in Wolverhampton. Yes, it is clean bright and modern, far more attractive than the old, cramped affair. But the thing about the scruffy old bus station was you could just turn up, and get a bus to just about anywhere you were likely to want to go. Now you rock up, fiddle about with the exciting new touch screen, and it tells you that the bus you want only picks up passengers from the other side of town.

Yes, it is important that our buses are safe and reliable. Nobody wants to see a fleet of old heaps that keep breaking down, but given the big fall in fuel costs, it is surely possible to maintain a safe, reliable bus service without resorting to an inflation-busting fare increase.

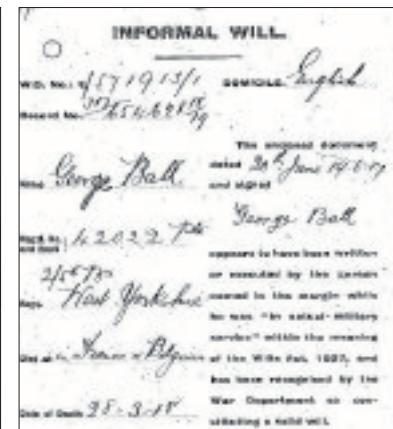
A cheap, cheerful, reliable and convenient service is all that most people require.



Private Benjamin Coley left all to his father



Private George Ball – buried at Bienvilliers



Close-up of an informal will

WEEK IN POLITICS

with Daniel Wainwright

THE words 'long-term economic plan' are still ringing through the streets of the West Midlands. Well, maybe that's a bit of an exaggeration. But they're certainly reverberating around the hotel on the South Staffordshire and Cannock border where George Osborne addressed a group of pensioners this week.

The Chancellor went table to table discussing his new pensioner bonds. Don't worry, that's not some later life version of Fifty Shades of Grey. Rather it's a way of giving savers something to offset the impact of low interest rates, which are helping people with mortgages but not doing a fat lot for those trying to build a nest egg.

The four aforementioned words are central to everything the Chancellor is campaigning on over the next few months.

"Stick with me and I'll make the country wealthy," he's effectively saying. Give the Treasury to the other lot and they'll undo all the good work."

Explain

It's really going to be a question as to how worth it the various upturns in the economy have been. If the cuts imposed since 2010 haven't been worth it then Mr Osborne's long-term economic plan is going to become an opposition pipe dream.

We're going to see him again before the election. He wants to set out a long-term economic plan for the Midlands as well.

Hopefully this will explain what we're actually meant to do with the Birmingham and Black Country Combined Authority that council leaders signed up to recently.

There has been a lot of talk about a so-called northern powerhouse. And Mr Osborne is adamant he wants a rebalanced economy that does not rely as heavily as previously on the City of London.

If the north is the powerhouse, the Midlands cannot just be the passed over middle child, a sort of unappreciated stale jam inside the doughnut that would be the rest of England.

We will see George Osborne again. It's about time we found out what exactly is on the table in terms of devolved powers.

No employer should be able to get away without paying their workers at least the National Minimum Wage.

But I do have to wonder if a 'naming and shaming' policy by the Department for Business, Innovation and Skills is really helpful.

All the ones in the West Midlands on the past two lists told of either 'genuine mistakes' or disputes with staff over their attendance.

It's very easy to say 'well they would say that'. But in one case a hairdresser in Walsall, with 15 years experience, was so upset that it's made her wonder whether or not she wants to take on trainees again.

Last wish of men who fell in battle

How brave soldiers made sure their loved ones would inherit all they had, DANIEL WAINWRIGHT explains

THEY are the last wishes of men who gave their lives in service to their country.

Black Country and Staffordshire soldiers ensured their loved ones would inherit all they had after they fell in battle in the Great War.

The wills of servicemen who made the ultimate sacrifice are simple affairs. Three show how each soldier bequeathed all they owned either to parents or a spouse in just one sentence.

The wills form part of a unique UK archive of 278,000 digitised First World War documents.

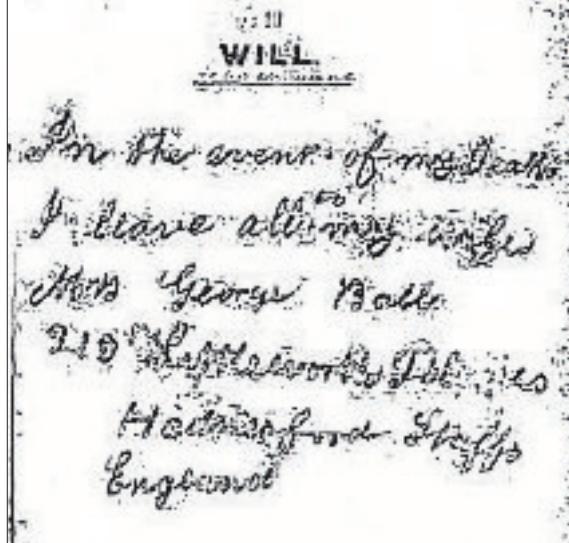
They have been preserved, scanned and placed online by records management company Iron Mountain and HM Courts & Tribunals Service as part of a modernisation programme and to mark the centenary of the start of the Great War.

Will

The wills, which were carried around by soldiers at all times in a pocket book tucked into their uniform, represent the soldier's last ever personally-written record. More than one million searches for individual wills have already been made since the archive went live last year.

The 'informal will' documents declare that the enclosed document appears to have been written or executed by the person named in the margin while he was 'in actual military service' within the meaning of the Wills Act, 1837, and has been recognised by the War Department as constituting a valid will."

Norman Joseph Brindley was born



Private George Ball left everything to his wife

in Wolverhampton in 1898, the son of Henry Joseph and Mary Ann Brindley (née Neale).

He had a brother, Herbert Henry, born in 1890 but who died a few months later. According to the 1901 census he lived with his parents at 118 Dudley Road in Blakenhall and the family lived in Cherry Street by the time of his death.

Norman was a Rifleman with the 8th

City of London Battalion, Post Office Rifles, and died on April 29 1918 aged just 20.

His will states he 'died at France' and that he left 'the whole of my property and effects' to his father.

Private George Ball from Huddersfield wanted to take care of his wife, Gertrude. Serving with the 2nd/5th Battalion, Prince of Wales's Own (West Yorkshire Regiment), he was killed in

His will gives the location of his death as 'France or Belgium' but he is buried in Bienvilliers Military Cemetery in Pas de Calais, France.

He lived in Gertrude in Littleworth Tilleries, Huddersfield. He was killed barely nine months after making his will. His simple will states: 'In the event of my death I leave all to my wife Mrs George Ball,' followed by their address.

The 23-year-old from Aldridge Road, Walsall Wood, served as a Private with the 1st Battalion, South Staffordshire Regiment.

His handwritten will states: 'In the event of my death I give the whole of my property and effects to my father Mr Benjamin Coley, The Vigo, Walsall Wood, near Walsall.'

Important

Pte Coley was buried at Thiepval Memorial in the Somme, France.

Last year marked the 100th anniversary of the start of the First World War.

Court minister Shailene Vara said: 'It is important to remember those who laid down their lives for this country. By working with Iron Mountain to make this treasure trove of documents easily accessible online, HM Courts & Tribunals Service is preserving the memories of our fallen soldiers.'

'This will be an invaluable tool for historians, genealogists and anyone who wants to add detail to their family tree.'

'It is a great example of the Government working innovatively to provide a modern and efficient public service.'

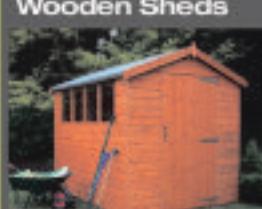
Scanned copies of wills are available for £10 from www.gov.uk/wills-probate-inheritance/searching-for-probate-records.

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Time to target the MPs and Lords

SEEING on TV the constant coverage of hospital A&E departments not meeting their 96 per cent target of seeing patients within four hours, as set by the government; surely anyone visiting an A&E department recently will realise just how hard working and totally committed to their task are our underpaid and very undervalued doctors and nurses. Their prime concern is to ensure that their patients receive the best possible care given the difficult circumstances they are expected to work in!

Isn't it time that we now set the Govern-

ment and Lords targets — laws can only be passed in the House of Commons and House of Lords when no less than 96 per cent of our elected Members of Parliament are present in the Commons and 96 per cent of that grand old band of unelected Lords are present in the House of Lords. To help the House of Lords meet its target we may be wise to even suggest that 96 per cent of the Lords present should actually be awake and conscious of what is going on!

G BOOTH
Stourbridge

Generous shoppers

ONCE again the Tesco Store at Burnt Tree Island in Dudley kindly allowed the Rotary Club of Dudley to visit their store on two days with Father Christmas and his sleigh to collect for local charities. The club would like to thank all the people of the Dudley area for their generous support this Christmas and a total of £3,175 was collected. Our sincere thanks to all.

PAULINE GREGORY
President
Rotary Club of Dudley

Car wash shocker

RE the letter from P Cole of Kingswinford. I have never written to any newspaper before, but am so shocked that in this day and age, ANY member of the public can be SO ignorant of what is happening to even comment, 'let alone complain, about the cleanliness of emergency vehicles is incomprehensible!

Just where has P Cole been burying their head!

A BETLEY
via email

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

POST

Dudley Chronicle,
Chronicle Editorial,
51-53 Queen Street,
Wolverhampton, WV1 1ES

Letters should be brief and MUST include name, address and telephone number. The Editor reserves the right to condense letters.

E-MAIL

Dudley.chrons@expressandstar.co.uk

No comment on GM and dairy farm crisis

I HEARD this week that after years of procrastination the EU has issued a new ruling that will allow each European country to decide for itself whether to embark on GM crop growing.

Apparently some have already decided — France, Germany, Scotland, and Wales are against this proposal, whereas England is in favour of GM crops and this decision is supported by ever powerful DEFRA.

This seems counter-intuitive doesn't it in the light of general consensus — the Soil Association is definitely against GM crops.

The other unfolding disastrous issue that is the position of our dairy farmers.

Over recent years farmers have been encouraged to produce more milk, breed-

ing cows with ever more milk producing capacity, investing in expensive state-of-the-art computerised milking parlours, of course abiding by all EU regulations with financial costs. And where are we now? Because of various factors, an overriding one being big supermarkets, constantly driving down the price of milk and therefore payments to farmers, now we have milk cheaper than bottled water!

The Government does and says nothing while more farmers struggle and go out of business, some have even committed suicide.

What of our long term sustainability? The farms gone are gone for good.

A FERRIER
Kinver

Locums for weekend call

DUE to an emergency on Saturday, January 3, my husband and I were in the A&E at Russells Hall Hospital.

Ambulance and A&E staff were the epitome of dignity and consideration while dealing with my husband.

There were people there who could have gone to their doctor instead but would have to probably have had to wait two weeks for an appointment, which in turn could have exacerbated their problem.

So what can you do instead? Nothing!

Please bring back a locum doctor taking it in turns to staff doctor surgeries at weekends then A&E might get some respite to do the job they are meant to do.

I applaud them all.

M MCPHEE
Stourbridge

Yes, we must save theatre

OUR wonderful Dudley Hippodrome should be saved and restored to what it was meant to be a live theatre. It would pull in the crowds. There is nothing in the world like live theatre.

I myself appeared there quite a few times in my younger days, as a singer, and loved it, and yes I have seen some of the so-called theatres in the West End of London and they are sheds compared to our Hippodrome.

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A WILLIAMS
Tipton

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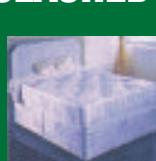
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£5m transformation of the Hagley Road college campus

TOWERING glass windows and modern architecture — this picture shows the new entrance to Stourbridge College as work enters its final stages.

A £5 million project is under way to transform the college campus, off Hagley Road, as part of a project to modernise facilities for students.

Work to landscape the campus is taking place ahead of its opening to staff and students in March.

Windows have been installed and the frame of the new reception area is having its finishing touches.

The multi-million pound building will also house the Centre of Excellence for Health and Social Care and Early Years and other teaching and learning facilities.

Construction workers are expected to complete the project by the end of February.

Special PC is in court for fiddling expenses

A SPECIAL police constable from Stourbridge fiddled his expenses to claim more than £1,300 in three years, a court has heard.

Mahesh Randeria claimed the extra cash by increasing mileages on expenses forms.

The 51-year-old, of Teasdale Way, has been suspended from his role and an investigation is ongoing.

He has worked with the force for 28 years and pleaded guilty to the offence at Birmingham Magistrates Court.

During October 2010 and November 2013 Randeria sometimes doubled the amount of miles he claimed to have travelled.

Randeria, a part-time steward at Aston Villa, was once honoured as the force's longest serving special constable. He was nicknamed The Heat — American slang for police — after appearing in a TV advert for energy supplier npower.

Owen Beale, prosecuting, said: "Mr Randeria was at the time of this offence a special constable at West Midlands Police."

Journey

"A journey he said was 61 miles, it in fact became clear that the journey distance was half that — 30 miles."

Sue Swan, defending, said Randeria had been praised for his excellent work and commanded for long service.

The fraudulent claims arose when he did not change his mileage after splitting from his partner and moving out of their home.

"Mr Randeria has had a catalogue of really catastrophic events in his life," said Ms Swan. Randeria had become a carer for his mother and best friend, both of whom had been diagnosed with cancer, and was also diagnosed as having Type 2 diabetes.

"Mr Randeria does accept his wrongdoing in this offence, however it appears to be borne out of laziness more than a calculated, predetermined dishonesty on his part," she added.

"It would have involved getting receipts and being organised with those receipts. He didn't bother with that."

Magistrate Peter Pratt said Randeria had abused his position of trust. He added: "The degree of culpability is undoubtedly determined by the fact that you were a public servant and that the loss was against a public employer. The culpability is the abuse of the degree of trust that was placed on you by your employer to act honourably and properly."

Randeria will be sentenced at Birmingham Crown Court on February 4.

New jobs as firm moves and expands

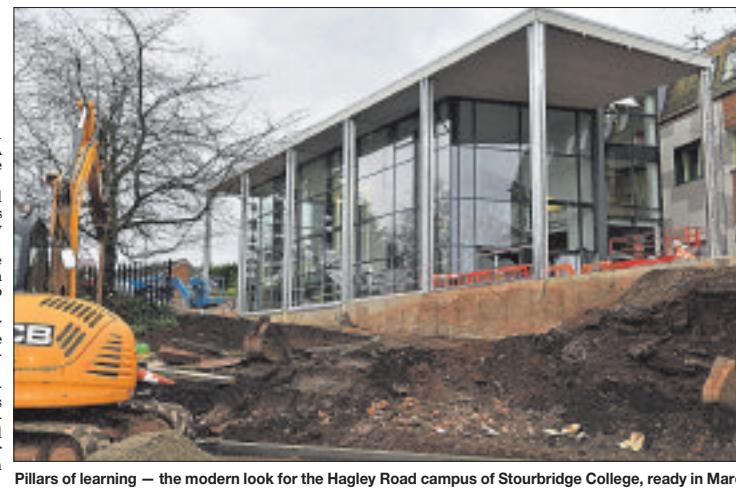
A MANUFACTURER of cleaning chemicals has bought new premises and expanded, creating seven new jobs.

MSH Chemical Manufacturing produces cleaning chemicals for commercial use, supplying to businesses, hospitals and schools.

The business had outgrown its existing facility on Oak Lane, Kingswinford, and identified a 14,000sq ft vacant premises on Shaw Road, Dudley, which had the space to accommodate its expanding manufacturing operations following increased demand.

It approached Lloyds Bank Commercial Banking, which provided a £400,000 loan to support the purchase of the premises using the Funding for Lending Scheme.

Additional funding of £105,000 was granted through the Regional Growth Fund which supports those looking to purchase new assets and create economic growth and local employment opportunities.



Pillars of learning — the modern look for the Hagley Road campus of Stourbridge College, ready in March

Climb cash boost for volunteer medics

A VOLUNTARY group which helps respond to 999 emergencies has been given a cash boost thanks to a charity challenge.

FastAid Black Country has been handed a cheque for £800 thanks to a group of Dudley politicians who took on a tough climb Britain's highest peak.

The money is part of the £4,600 raised by the Bert Bissell Memorial Walk, which saw a group of councillors and Dudley North MP Ian Austin climb Britain's highest peak in memory of Dudley peace campaigner Bert Bissell.

FastAid Black Country are Community First Responders, volunteers who respond to emergency 999 calls. They are trained by the ambulance service to deliver basic life support to patients in cardiac arrest or with conditions such as strokes and choking.

Mayor's Consort Councillor Adam Aston, who also took part in the charity bid, said: "They are a great team of volunteers giving their time to help the rest of us and I'm really pleased we've been able to support their work."

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NHS

Helping ex-military adapt to civvy street



Supporting the scheme are Councillor Dave Tyler, programme manager Andy Foster, Ian Austin MP and Jacky Khan

EX-SERVICEMEN and women who are struggling to cope with life after the forces are being helped by a new project.

Shoulder to Shoulder is an initiative which has been set up by the volunteer charity Timebank to help those who find it hard to move on after the stress and sometimes the horrors of active duty.

The Dudley-based charity says the programme is designed to be an informal setting where they can talk about their problems and start to plan for the future.

With the UK operation in Afghanistan now at an end, those behind the scheme are aware there will be many former soldiers attempting to return to normality.

While the initiative seeks to help veterans of all ages, it is young men that are of particular concern.

Programme manager Andy Forster said: "It is a macho culture so if someone is having panic attacks there is no support network and some have no family or friends to come back to."

Army life can also have other knock-on effects, says Mr Forster, particularly concerning control of anger.

"If someone is in a pub and some-

thing is going to kick off, they are not able to have a proportionate response," he said. "It's the same when trying to get their benefits. They become the hidden underclass, sofa hoppers."

"The ex-soldiers who are in prison tend to be there for the same reason, violence – particularly domestic violence."

Dudley North MP Ian Austin said: "This is a really important project. These are people who have devoted their lives and taken great risks to serve our country and deserve our society's full support."

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First Aid Kit
Symphony Hall, Birmingham
SWEDISH sisters Klara and Johanna Soderberg have been on a lot of radars lately. Not only are they touring as First Aid Kit on the back of their latest album Stay Gold, they can also be found on Swedish stamps and have been nominated for a Brit award for best International Group.

Play full of Eastern promise

REVIEWS



Celebrities and their dancers ready for the Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour 2015

Strictly top rate as Simon's terrific tango wins the votes

Strictly Come Dancing Live Tour
Barclaycard Arena, Birmingham
NO doubt about it, the Argentine Tango stole the show.

And it meant that TV series runner up Simon Webbe got to lift the glitterball on the first night of the SCD tour at Birmingham.

The packed arena went wild as Simon and professional dancer Kristina pulled off the dance to perfection – although they only managed to get 29 out of 30 from the judges. There were 10s from dancer Camilla Dallerup and her previous celebrity partner Tom Chambers, they lifted the glitterball

back in 2008, but needless to say, to loud boos, only 9 from Mr Sunshine himself, head judge Craig Revel Horwood.

In second place was TV series champion Caroline Flack dancing with Tristan MacManus. Saturdays singer Frankie Bridge had to pull out because of pregnancy sickness and was replaced by former celebrity contestant S Club 7's Rachel Stevens.

The other celebrity dancers were the hunky Thom Evans, exuberant Alison Hammond, popular Mark Wright and the less than impressive Scott Mills. As host Zoe Ball said it was Strictly Brum Dancing and the crowd lapped it up. **Sue Attwater**

Mark Shipp

Their popularity, certainly in Birmingham, has rocketed. Three years ago they were playing The Rainbow which is in serious contrast to their latest sell-out gig at Symphony Hall.

Opening with the title track of their album Lion's Roar, Klara's unmistakable voice cut through the darkness before the stage exploded in a burst of lights.

The siblings have one of the most recognisable sounds on the folk/coun-

try circuit at the moment with Klara on acoustic guitar and her sister rocking out in a swirl of hair on her keyboard.

They followed this with the title track of their new album, and then Blue, another from Lion, and kept the packed hall happy with tracks such as King of the World, Master Pretender, Waitress and My Silver Lining. A highlight was them singing GhostTown unplugged.

Danny Farragher

New Rae of light on music scene

Album reviews

By Leon Burakowski

LANCASHIRE singer/songwriter Rae Morris lives up to her promise, after collaborations with Bombay Bicycle Club, Clean Bandit and Tom Odell, on her debut album **Unguarded**.

Her poised, elegant style with an appealing hint of vulnerability has lots of appeal. Kate Bush is a clear influence and Rae also seems a kindred spirit to Ellie Goulding. The 22-year-old has several potential hits on this Atlantic Records release including Under The Shadows, jazzy groove Closer and her collaboration with Fryars (AKA) on the frosty electronica of Cold.

She will be in concert, with support from Fryars, at Birmingham's Institute in Digbeth on Thursday, February 5.

Accessible

It had been long delayed by the previous record label's inertia but **Fryars** second album **Power** (**Fiction**) is finally out and hopefully Fiction will be rewarded for giving a platform to Benjamin Garrett (AKA Fryars), one of the most talented and promising singer-songwriters on the UK electronica scene. Let's just hope it didn't get lost in the festive rush.

He has a knack of writing a song that instantly sounds familiar, which is usually a good sign, and does that trick several times here, with Sequoia, Thing Of Beauty and Cool Like Me.

His melancholy sound is accessible enough to appeal to pop fans of outfits like Bastille and admirers of more esoteric artists like James Blake.

American indie folk/rock band **The Decemberists** are proof that a great band can still make it through talent



Rae Morris — poised, elegant style on her debut album **Unguarded**

and graft, rather than manufactured hype. Fronted by Colin Meloy, the Oregon outfit have imprinted themselves on the US scene with honest heart-felt rootsy rock, particularly since they ditched long concept songs in favour of a more radio friendly approach.

Last album **The King Is Dead** went straight into the US chart at number one and featured Grammy nominated single **Down By The Water**. They even found themselves on **The Simpsons**.

Seventh studio album **What A Terrible World What A Beautiful World** (**Rough Trade**) will continue their success due to its strong songs delivered in traditional semi-acoustic style. The key song **12/17/12**, written after the Newtown school shootings, is a harmonica-accompanied classic that

would make Springsteen proud. See **The Decemberists** in concert at **The Institute** in Birmingham on February 18.

If pop genius Brian Wilson of The Beach Boys had grown up in an age of moogs and synths, then he may have made an album like **Panda Bear Meets The Grin Reaper** (**Domino**).

Singer/songwriter Noah Lennox (AKA Panda Bear), from American experimentalists **Animal Collective**, has created a highly atmospheric album blending fidgety electronics with plaintive vocals in his own style of techno-psychadelia. It includes a brainstorm of effects, such as yelping dogs on the stomping glam cruncher **Mr Noah**. The playfulness recalls Brian Eno's early solo work.

The title is no joke as a sense of loss haunts several of the songs, particularly **Tropic of Cancer** (with its refrain "you can't come back, you won't come back to me") and **Lonely Wanderer** with its gorgous Debussy sample.

Songwriter and singer Stuart Murdoch exercises his demons over an eclectic variety of musical styles on **Girls In Peacetime Want To Dance** (**Matador**), the ninth studio album from Glaswegian band **Belle and Sebastian** and their first for five years.

The subjects can be sombre, such as the songwriter's struggle with Chronic Fatigue Syndrome, but the music is anything but – hitting the dancefloor in a Daft Punk way on **The Party Line** and sounding akin to **Erasure** synth pop on **Enter Syria Plat**. However, **The Cat With The Cream** recalls the more tender indie-pop sounds of earlier albums.

Gaz Coombes, former frontman of Britpop trio **Supergrass**, is back with his second solo album, **Matador** (**Hot Fruit/Caroline**), a quality collection of songs blending acoustic guitar strumming and electronics. Songs like **Seven Walls** and **To The Wire** are subtle but rewarding. He's still Alright and he's at **Birmingham Glee Club** on February 9.

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Darcey Bussell meets Dance Track student Richard Kamara, age 10, at one of the new studios

Darcey gets tour of ballet HQ

A MAJOR ballet company is throwing open the doors of its revamped base to give a behind-the-scenes glimpse inside Birmingham Royal Ballet.

The company's three-storey HQ, behind the Birmingham Hippodrome in Thorp Street, has had a £2.7 million revamp including three refurbished dance studios.

The public are invited to see the company's new rehearsal studios on guided tours on Sunday from 11am to 4pm.

Some of Birmingham Royal Ballet's costumes and wigs will be on display and there will also be informal performances from some of BRB's dancers, as well as performances from Freefall Dance Company, an initiative created by the Birmingham Royal Ballet for gifted young people with severe learning difficulties.

VIPS had a tour of the new facilities on Monday, including Strictly Come Dancing judge and former Royal Ballet star Darcey

Bussell, in her capacity as President of Birmingham Royal Ballet's Campaign for the Future.

She said: "It is so rewarding to see the results of a fundraising effort that has enabled a company close to my heart to continue to be a first-class rehearsal facility for its dancers, staff and the wider public who can all enjoy this marvellous creative space."

Talent

"The new facilities will allow Birmingham Royal Ballet to welcome the community, nurture the talent of the future and maintain their position at the forefront of both British and international dance."

"The transformation of Birmingham Royal Ballet's building is a key milestone of our Campaign for the Future. Our goal now is to secure the remaining £2.5m of our £15m target to ensure the studios are bursting with new work by world-leading choreogra-

phers as well as creative opportunities for local people to discover, take part and excel in classical ballet."

Birmingham's ballet company moved to the city from London, where it had been the Royal Ballet's touring company, nearly a quarter of a century ago and this is the first time the facilities have been updated since, partly thanks to a £1.85m grant from Arts Council England.

It also sends its professionals into Birmingham and Black Country schools via its Dance Track programme to introduce ballet to youngsters and talent spot potential future stars.

BRB presents An Evening of Music and Dance, including Excerpts from Swan Lake, at Birmingham Symphony Hall on Saturday, January 31, and then launches its season at the Hippodrome with Moving Stateside, featuring three American ballets, on February 18 and Coppélia from February 24.

Bournville actress is nominated for an Oscar

SHE is an acclaimed actress nominated for an Oscar for her powerful performance as the wife of scientist Stephen Hawking.

Felicity Jones has gone from advertising face wash for spotty teenagers to starring in The Theory of Everything – and her parents met while working at the Express & Star.

The 31-year-old grew up in Bournville, Birmingham, and was raised by her mother, Julia, who had worked in the newspaper's advertising department. Her father Gareth Jones was a journalist at the Wolverhampton head office.

Felicity's mother is the sister of actor Michael Hrdley, who has appeared in films such as The Boat That Rocked and on TV in Ashes to Ashes.

Break

Julia raised Felicity and her brother alone after she and Gareth divorced when Felicity was three.

Felicity's big break came in 1996 when she played Alice in the film adaptation of Edith Nesbit's novel The Treasure Seekers. She also appeared in Central's adaptation of the children's book series The Worst Witch, playing school bully Ethel Hallow. When she was 17 she was in the advert for Johnson & Johnson's Clean and Clear, as a teenager worried about her skin.

She played Emma Carter in The Archers on Radio 4 and appeared in a Doctor Who episode, The Unicorn and the Wasp, in 2008. Her big screen roles included parts in Ricky Gervais and



Oscar nominee Felicity Jones

Stephen Merchant's 2010 film Cemetery Junction and appearing as Harry Osborn's assistant in The Amazing Spider-Man 2.

Her performance in The Theory of Everything, alongside best actor nominee Eddie Redmayne as Hawking, has seen her nominated for an Oscar. She will compete against Marion Cotillard, Julianne Moore, Rosamund Pike and Reese Witherspoon for the award.

"It's a film that we all cared so much about because we were playing real-life people and complicated, nuanced, interesting characters. This is all just wonderful that people enjoy it," she said.

Clark hits the right notes on The Voice

HAIR stylist Clark Carmody from Kidderminster has spoken of his shock after making it through to the next round of The Voice after choosing to be on Rita Ora's team.

The 27-year-old performed Sam Smith's hit I'm Not The Only One on Saturday night's show. Pop princess Ora turned round in her chair first and was followed by Welsh crooner Tom Jones.

The 27-year-old who hails from the Spennells estate, Kidderminster, decided to choose Rita as his mentor and is now through to the next round.

Clark now lives near Stratford-upon-Avon with his girlfriend Nicola Whelan and their nine-month-old daughter Primrose. He watched Saturday night's show at home with his friends and family, and many were unaware of how well he had done. "I couldn't tell them all I'd got through as I was told me to keep it quiet but they were all chuffed when they saw that Rita had turned," he said.

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Author's book looks at Zeebrugge tragedy

IT was a tragedy that shook the world.

On the evening of March 6, 1987, the Herald of Free Enterprise set off from the Belgian port of Zeebrugge destined for Dover carrying 459 passengers and a crew of 80. It would never arrive.

Just 23 minutes of leaving the port the ferry capsized when water cascaded into the car deck after the bow doors were mistakenly left open. A total of 193 people lost their lives.

Memories of the disaster have inspired a first book by author Iain Yardley, of Temple Street, Lower Gornal, entitled 'Ninety Seconds at Zeebrugge: The Herald of Free Enterprise Story'.

Mr Yardley had travelled on the Herald of Free Enterprise on a school trip the year before aged 14 and so the tragedy left a lasting impression.

Impact

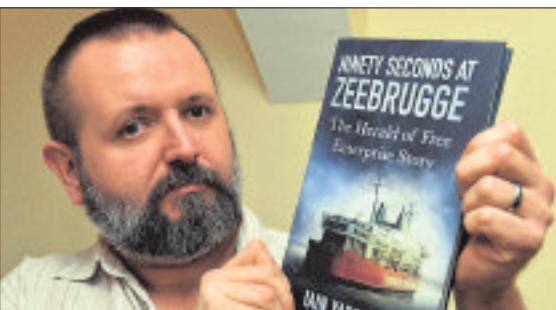
He said: "I think it left such an impact because it was ordinary people like me who died. I could have been on board."

The 42-year-old has spoken to more than 20 survivors, as well as staff from hospitals that treated the casualties, in compiling the book, which took Mr Yardley eight years to write.

To make contact with the survivors, he researched memorials set up in tribute to the victims as well as funds set up in their names. He also put out appeals for people to contact him in the letters pages of local newspapers.

He said: "I just wanted to get it right, which was why it took so long. I could have rehashed a lot of information that people already knew but I didn't want to do that. What I really wanted to do was tell the stories that people hadn't read about, or thought about before."

Mr Yardley, who designs and commissions scrap metal furnaces, said



Author Iain Yardley, of Lower Gornal, with his new book about the ferry disaster



Capsized — the stricken vessel after the disaster that killed 193 people in 1987

he there had been a lack of literature available on the tragedy.

A number of poignant stories emerged from Mr Yardley's research into the passengers, such as British Army personnel returning after serving in Germany. One family was returning to be at the bedside of their dying father and another was bringing their baby daughter home to be christened.

Mr Yardley added: "The book is a recalling of the disaster and the immediate aftermath from the point of view of the people who were involved."

A public inquiry was critical of operator Townsend Thoresen and the design of the ship.

The book is available via History Press for £20, online at Amazon for £16.10 or £12 for the Kindle edition.

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Petition will oppose free transport cuts for children

Love is in the air at Himley Hall open day



Hall together now — Laura Eagles and Adam Davies are planning their big day at Himley Hall

COUPLES planning to tie the knot got the chance to tour historic Himley Hall, which holds civil wedding and partnership ceremonies.

They saw the venue's refurbished art-deco style North Wing, which once housed the Earl of Dudley's swimming pool and cinema. Wedding co-ordinators and catering team were on hand to answer questions.

Registrars from the Staffordshire Registration Service also guided couples through the civil ceremony process during the open day on Sunday, attended by around 100 couples.

Among them were Laura Eagles, from West Bromwich, and Adam Davies, of Stallings Lane, Kingswinford. Mr Davies, 22, a Dudley Council worker, popped the question on Christmas Day. The couple have now started planning for their big day to be held in 2017. Mr Davies and Miss Eagles, a retail supervisor from Great Bridge, have been together for five years.

Business helps YMCA's project helping homeless

A PROJECT which helps homeless young people in the Black Country has been boosted thanks to a charitable donation.

The YMCA Open Door project provides supported lodgings for homeless young people in secure and friendly settings in the homes of volunteer hosts.

More than 80 hosts are already based across the Black Country, offering a home as a place to stay while helping the individuals learn life skills to ensure young people move on successfully into independence.

Staff at Stourbridge beauticians Tej and Co helped raise £250 for the cause with a raffle. Owner Tej

A PETITION has been launched against proposed cuts to free transport for children with special needs.

Campaigners have labelled the Dudley Council plan as 'immoral' and say they will fight the plans, which the authority hopes will save more than £200,000 a year.

West Midlands MEP Bill Etheridge, who is a councillor in Sedgley, urged the council to look for cuts elsewhere instead of hitting the service.

"Surely savings could be made elsewhere, like scrapping the position of chief executive at the council for a start," he said.

"It would be immoral to scrap this support to the families taking these children to this nursery when the same local authority recently approved massive hikes to fat cat salaries and also voted down UKIP proposals to reduce the number of councillors in Dudley."

By Andrew Turton

The authority said it is not legally required to provide the service and has launched a consultation on charges.

The council currently pays for 49 children with additional needs to travel to specialist nurseries in the borough.

But leaders claim they have been forced to consider axing the service after funding cutbacks from central Government. They also said that by September, when the proposed charges could be introduced, only 11 children would be affected.

Limited

Councillor Tim Crumpton, who is in charge of children services in Dudley, said: "This is not something we would want to do but unfortunately due to the continued reduction in Government funding we are limited to providing services we legally must provide."

He claimed many of the families affected received benefits that can help towards travel costs for their children.

Councillor Crumpton added: "However, we know that for some people this could be difficult and we are working hard behind the scenes at how we deliver the specialist nursery service across the borough to ensure every child who needs it has access to it."

"We have looked at the figures carefully and do not intend to remove a service from people who have become accustomed to receiving it."

Tory education spokesman, Councillor Les Jones, added: "I have been critical for a number of years of how much the authority spends on transport in children's and adult services. The majority of this cost is through taxis. This seems to be a political move to shift blame towards Government cuts."

The consultation runs until March 2. Visit www.dudley.gov.uk

Have a say on your community at meetings

A SERIES of meetings are being held this month for residents to have a say on issues in their that affect their area.

The community forums are run by Dudley Council and attended by ward councillors.

A meeting for Netherton, St Andrews, Woodside and Quarry Bank takes place on Monday at 6.30pm at Woodside Community Centre, Highgate Road.

The Gornal, Upper Gornal and Woodsetton forum starts at 6.30pm the same day at Roberts Street Primary School, Lower Gornal.

Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood councillor David Sparks has hailed the meetings as 'an opportunity to have their say about how we can work better with communities'.

Sedgley. Both are on Tuesday at 6.30pm.

The forum for Norton, Stourbridge East, Wollaston and Stourbridge Town is held at Gig Mill Primary School, The Broadway, Norton on Wednesday, January 28, at 6.30pm.

Councillor

Residents of Castle and Priory, St James's and St Thomas's can attend the St Thomas's Community Network, Beechwood Road, Dudley at 6.30pm, also on Wednesday.

Quarry Bank and Dudley Wood councillor David Sparks has hailed the meetings as 'an opportunity to have their say about how we can work better with communities'.

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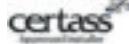
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COMMERCIAL FEATURE

DO you need a more imaginative way of resolving your family law issues?

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Clare says cuts to legal aid and court budgets mean family cases are taking three times as long to resolve, via the traditional court route.

"The system is compromised by delay, uncertainty and anxiety as to costs. You should therefore consult lawyers who are alive to alternative methods of resolving disputes," adds Clare.

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This includes the ability to conduct "roundtable meetings", to identify cases suitable for mediation, be able to participate in the Collaborative Law process and/or experience in referring matters to arbitration.

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Although the High Court has recently



Expertise – Clare Wiseman from George Green Solicitors

made a "scapegoat" of a husband who failed to disclose the extent of his financial wealth and ordered that he pay his wife's costs, this is often little consolation to parties involved in difficult and distressing family disputes.

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pact of an already stressful situation. We offer advice and assistance at a time, location and in a way to suit you," says Clare. "It is no longer a case of 'one size fits all'."

Having trained as a Collaborative Lawyer, Clare confirms that "sitting round a table is often a more productive way of resolving family matters".

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Make the switch and save on energy bills

COMMERCIAL FEATURE

Dudleyborough residents looking to save cash in 2015 can make a start by saving money on their energy bills and taking part in Dudley Council's big switch campaign.

Part of a national initiative, the scheme sees councils across the country taking part in a collective energy - switching auction.

Energy companies compete during the auction to offer the best tariffs to people who sign up to the scheme. Participating residents then have the option of switching their energy supplier to the successful company. If they decide not to proceed then there is no obligation to do so.

There have been five big switch auctions in Dudley over the past 18 months. A total of 540 households have switched to a cheaper energy supplier, saving residents over £105,000.

The next auction takes place on February 3 and residents need to sign up by February 2 in order to take part.

Councillor Pete Lowe, leader of Dudley Council, said:

"We know that meeting the demands of rising energy bills is difficult for a number of our residents so we are supporting this scheme to help people make savings."

"The scheme works on the principle of offering bigger savings as we increase the number of people taking part."

People can register for free by simply calling Dudley Council Plus on 0300 555 2345 or they can register online at www.dudley.gov.uk by following the link to the big switch. Anyone who wishes to take part will need a copy of their energy bill and details of the tariff they are currently on during registration.

Once the auction has taken place, the successful energy companies will write to registrants with their offer. At this point people can choose to switch if they wish and enter into a new contract with the energy provider.



BUSINESS PROFILE

Business name: Dudley Council Plus

Phone number: 0300 555 2345

Website: www.dudley.gov.uk

Key Areas: Saving money on energy bills for residents in the Dudley borough

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New fitness and beauty centre

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GYM 212 is not just a great place to work out but also very welcoming with a friendly environment which makes it the perfect place to escape from everyday life.

The new fitness and beauty centre was recently taken over by fitness model and personal trainer Richard Edwards who fully believes in the one to one experience to get the best results.

Richard has been involved with fitness for over 12 years, however his break and inspiration to get serious in the industry came when he was selected from thousands for the Cover Model Competition of 'Mens Health Magazine' in 2012. This illustrious moment was a springboard for him to develop his craft and physique in the modelling world 'and' fitness industry, where he helps and supports others from applying his knowledge and motivation as a personal trainer and fitness TV host.

Nutritional science

His ethic is heavily based on sound nutritional science, applied to individual's goals. Old school bodybuilding methodologies are utilized, with and additional element of health, fitness and



most importantly 'sustainability' being applied... after all, unlike a body builder who has weeks or months to plan for a competition, a fitness models photo-shoots can come with less than 24 hours notice, therefore it's a case of being prepared all year round so when the opportunity arises you will be ready and at the top of your game!

Transformations

Richard has suffered serious setbacks in recent years but has proven that amazing transformations are possible time and time again if you are willing to dedicate and apply a life of improvement.

Supplements play a large part in Richard's

preparation and maintenance, he is a keen runner and enjoys entering events/races, the application and trialing of varying supplementation focuses not only on muscle promotion but supporting and developing new levels of fitness and performance, in the gym and on the road!

Maximise

He has been working closely with body building 4 you (www.bodybuilding4you.co.uk) for some years now and is always trying new products to maximise all facets of a fitness model's mind, endurance, strength and physique. Richard also gives advice for free at www.powerblog.co.uk

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Classic rock and some horror too

SINGER Paul Carrack, the voice of Mike & The Mechanics and Ace, will be in concert at the Symphony Hall, Birmingham, on Saturday night with old favourites and songs from his recent Rain or Shine album.

Other gigs include Queen fronted by Adam Lambert at the Barclaycard Arena tomorrow (Friday), the Mark Lanegan Band at Digbeth's The Institute on Monday and vintage jump jive from King Pleasure & The Biscuit Boys at the Robin 2 on Thursday.

Horror rockers Slipknot are at the Barclaycard Arena on Tuesday — fans of the macabre may also want to check out Night of the Zombie by The Circus of Horrors at Wolverhampton Civic Hall on Saturday.

Solo or Bust' for singer Charlie

THE one refusenik to the hugely successful McBusted venture, former Busted lead singer Charlie Simpson, brings his folk-influenced songs to Wolverhampton's Slade Rooms on Tuesday.

Simpson, unlike his celebrity former bandmates, has not joined the super-group blend of McFly and Busted who have been enjoying arena-sized success around the country. Instead he will be performing without a band for the first time in intimate acoustic shows performing songs from his top ten album Long Road Home.

Tickets cost £16.50. Call 0870 320 7000.

Theatre group see Peter Pan put on trial for refusing to grow up

Harvey is revived at The Rep

MAUREEN Lipman, fondly remembered as the BT grannie, will join Gimme Gimme actor James Dreyfus in Lindsay Posner's new production of 1940s American comedy Harvey at Birmingham Rep next month, before heading for the West End.

The Broadway comedy-drama by Mary Chase was made into a classic movie starring James Stewart as Elwood P Dowd who, to the dismay of his family, has an unwavering friendship with a six-foot tall rabbit called Harvey, who is invisible to everyone else. The production is based on the Broadway revival of 2012 which starred Jim Parsons, from TV's Big Bang Theory, as Dowd.

Lipman, who was at the Rep in 2013 in Oliver Cotton's Daytona, plays Dowd's exasperated sister.

It is at the Centenary Square venue from February 6 to 21.



Maureen Lipman and James Dreyfus in Harvey at The Rep

AN UPCOMING play will see Peter Pan head back to Neverland and they stand trial for refusing to grow up.

The Trial of Peter Pan, which will have a free performance at the Birmingham Rep's Door venue, features a cast made up entirely of actors with learning disabilities from the Stourbridge-based Side by Side theatre group.

Director Susan Wallin MBE, aged 71, from Norton, said: "In our play Peter is all grown up and the whole play has been inspired by the idea in the original JM Barrie work that Wendy's daughter was the next to go with him."

"I decided to carry that on and our play features her great-granddaughter Angela. However, every time Peter comes back to our world he ages and he is now 47 but thinks he is still a child, so he is put on trial for refusing to grow up."

The play will be shown for free at the Birmingham Rep on Saturday, January 31, and will receive a full run at the Stourbridge Town Hall in June.

Actors

Mrs Wallin said the theatre group had received several awards.

"They are all dedicated theatrical actors," she said. "We have performed at the Edinburgh Fringe as well as abroad in Sweden and Prague."

"The actors' ability to take on the challenges of learning great swathes of lines, as well as being responsible for moving their own set on the stage, is remarkable."

The group is entirely self-funded and Mrs Wallin said it was currently on the lookout for new members.

She said: "The only prerequisites are that they have to be dedicated and have a real interest in theatre."

"This is not a club but a real theatre group that requires commitment and a dedication to the arts."

The show at the Rep will run from 12.30pm to 1pm on The Door stage. Tickets are free and can be booked via birminghamrep.co.uk or by calling 0121 236 4455.



From left, David Atkins, James Emtage and Susie Schartz rehearse for Side By Side's The Trial of Peter Pan

It's not the only Pan-tastic production at The Rep as the main house hosts riotous comedy Peter Pan Goes Wrong, Mischief Theatre's spoof about an accident-prone theatre company in similar vein to their hit production The Play That Goes Wrong. It's on from Tuesday to Sunday.

Brian Conley stars in circus musical Bar-num at Wolverhampton Grand from Tuesday to Saturday. Science fiction rock 'n' roll musical Return To The Forbidden Planet shows robots rock at Birmingham's New Alexandra Theatre, Monday to Saturday.

Tributes to the super trouopers

ABBA fans are in for a treat with two top tributes to the Swedish pop wonders of the 1970s and 80s taking place.

Abba Mania celebrate 40 years since Agnetha, Bjorn, Benny and Anni-Frid won Eurovision by playing the hits at Wolverhampton's Grand Theatre tomorrow night (Friday), whilst Bootleg Abba take their opportunity to thank them for the music at Bilton's Robin 2 next Saturday, January 31. The Robin show will also feature the Bee Gees Downunder.

There's more nostalgia at the Grand this Saturday with the Sensational 60s Experience featuring Herman's Hermits, Dave Berry, The Swinging Blue Jeans and The Union Gap, among others.

Three comedians stand up at club

A NIGHT of stand-up comedy and a three-course meal is being hosted by a Black Country rugby club.

Dudley comic Wayne Beese leads the acts on the bill tomorrow night (Friday) at Stourbridge Rugby Club's Stourton Park ground, off Bridgnorth Road.

Joining rising star Wayne will be improviser Ben Briggs and Brummie comedian Andy White.

Tickets cost £20 which includes the meal. The show starts at 7.30pm.

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BBC2

6.00 Film: San Demetrio, London. (1943) **7.35 Film:** Angels One Five. (1953) **9.10** Fred Dibnah's Age of Steam. (R) **9.40** Fred Dibnah's Age of Steam. (R) **10.10** British Isles: A Natural History. (H) **11.00** FA Cup Rewind: Fourth-Round Classics. **12.00** James Martin: Home Comforts. (R) **1.30** The Great British Obituary. **1.30** Great British Live International Bowls: The World Indoor Championships. **4.30** Somerset: After the Floods. (R) **5.30** Fog It! **6.30 Porridge.** (R) **7.00** **The Two Ronnies Sketchbook.** Ronnie Corbett and Ronnie Barker present an hour's collection of humour monologues, musical numbers and sketches, including the classic Fork Handles. Last in the series. (R) **7.30 Ronnie Barker: The Many Faces Of.** The story of a quiet, dedicated man who might have been a bank manager, but went on to become one of the nation's most popular comedy stars. Ben Elton, Michael Grade, David Tewin and Josephine Tewin are among friends and colleagues who remember his partnership with Ronnie Corbett in sketch show **The Two Ronnies**, as skinflint grocer Arkwright in **Open All Hours** and crafty prisoner Fletch in **Porridge**. There is also a look at his prolific writing career and his work as an actor in serious roles. (R) **8.30 The Two Ronnies: The Studio Recordings.** A collection of unedited takes from the classic comedy show, featuring both famous and more obscure sketches from programmes recorded in 1979 and 1980. (R) **9.00 Holbein: Eye of the Tudors – A Culture Show Special.** Waldemar Januszczak looks at the life and career of Henry VIII's court artist Hans Holbein, exploring where he came from and examining the unsolved secrets hidden in his work. **10.00 Film:** The Artist. (2011) A 1920s movie actor gives an actress her big break, but his career suffers with the advent of sound. Oscar-winning silent drama, starring Jean Dujardin and Berenice Bejo. **11.35 International Bowls.** The World Indoor Championships. Highlights of the Open Singles semi-finals. **12.35 Film:** Thirteen Days. (2000) **2.50** This is BBC Two.

ITV

6.00 CITV: Bottom Knocker Street. **6.10** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.20** Bottom Knocker Street. (R) **6.35** Dino Dan. (R) **6.45** Dino Dan. (R) **7.00** Cannibals. (R) **7.10** Sooty. (R) **7.25** Signed Stories: Share a Story. (R) **7.30** Scrambled: Nerds & Geeks. (R) **7.45** Scrambled: Adventure Time. (R) **8.00** Scrambled: Horrid Harry. (R) **8.50** Scrambled: Hulk and the Agents of S.M.A.S.H. **9.25** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **10.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **11.20** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **12.25** ITV News: Weather. **12.35** The Jeremy Kyle Show. (R) **1.35** The Undrables. (R) **2.05** Who's Doing the Dishes? (R) **3.05** Doc Martin. (R) **4.05** Big Star's Little Star. (R) **5.05** Regional Programme; Weather. **5.15** ITV News: Weather. **5.30** You've Been Framed! Top 100 Senior Moments. (R) **6.30** **Planet's Got Talent.** Highlights from the global Got Talent franchise, including a Michael Jackson-themed diabolical juggler, a farmyard animal impressionist and a moped stiltwalker. **7.00 Harry Hill's Stars in Their Eyes.** A sales assistant, a senior manager of a tanning salon chain, a children's singing tutor, a mother and a student impersonate famous singers as they vie for a place in the final. **8.05** **Take Me Out.** Sales consultant Lewis from Glasgow, strongman Archie from Wiltshire, toy designer Adam from Cornwall and model Scott from London vie for the attentions of 30 single women, intent on capturing their interest and securing a date. However, first they must let the female participants know their lights on as a sign of approval. Host Paddy McGuinness monitors their progress and reviews the dating action from last week's couples on the Isle of Farnsands. **9.20** **The Jonathan Ross Show.** New series. The host is joined by Take That, Kingsman. Service stars Colin Firth and Taron Egerton, actress Charlotte Quinten and comedienne Katherine Ryan. **10.20** **ITV News:** Weather. **10.30 Film:** Bridget Jones: The Edge of Reason. (2004) Comedy sequel, starring Renée Zellweger, Colin Firth and Hugh Grant. **12.30** **Jackpot247.** (3.00) The Jeremy Kyle Show USA. (R) **3.40** ITV Nightscreen.

CHANNEL 4

6.10 How I Met Your Mother. (R) **6.35** How I Met Your Mother. (R) **7.00** Snowdon Race 2014. **7.55** The Morning Line. **9.00** The King of Queens. (R) **9.30** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.00** Everybody Loves Raymond. (R) **10.30** Fraser. (R) **11.00** Fraser. (R) **11.30** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **11.55** The Big Bang Theory. (R) **12.25** Speed with Guy Martin. (R) **1.30** Chitty 4 Racing. Live coverage from Cheltenham and Doncaster. **4.00** Come Dine with Me. (R) **5.00** The Simpsons. (R) **5.30** The Simpsons. (R) **6.00** **Channel 4 News.** **6.30 The Restoration Man.** A London couple have a dramatic vision for a warning device and control tower in the Highlands, but find the restoration of the 700 window panes swallowing 50 per cent of their budget. (R) **7.30 Guy Martin's Spitfire.** In May 2010, a modified Spitfire was shot down and crash-landed on a beach in northern France, where it slowly sank into the sand. The wreckage was finally recovered in the 1980s and stored in France for more than 20 years. Guy Martin joins a two-year project to rebuild the aeroplane, revealing the engineering and skills involved, and providing a fitting homage to the bravery of everyone involved in its service. **9.00 Film:** Holocaust: Night Will Fall. (2014) Premiere. In May 1945, the Ministry of Information's Sidney Bernstein was commissioned to make a documentary that would provide undeniable evidence of the Nazis' crimes. He assembled a team of film-makers including Alfred Hitchcock to record the true horror of the concentration camps, but despite initial government support, the project was deemed too politically sensitive and never broadcast. Now, 70 years later, Bernstein's film has been restored and completed by the Imperial War Museum, and this programme tells the story of its creation. Narrated by Helena Bonham Carter. **10.20 Film:** Unstoppable. (2010) Tony Scott's action thriller, starring Denzel Washington and Chris Pine. **12.10 Film:** The Departed. (2006) **2.45** Hollywood. (R) **5.00** SuperSport Winter Survival Tips. (R) **5.55** NFL: Rush Zone. **5.40** Roar the Racing Car. (R)

CHANNEL 5

6.00 Milkshake! **10.00** Teenage Mutant Ninja Turtles. (R) **10.35** Access. **10.40** Ice Road Trackers. (R) **11.35** Ice Road Trackers. (R) **12.30** Ice Road Trackers. (R) **1.25** Film: Columbus: Death Hits the Jackpot. (1991) Detective drama, with Peter Falk and Rip Torn. **3.25** Film: Columbo: Murder Under Glass. (1978) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. **5.00** Film: Columbo: A Matter of Honour. (1976) Crime drama, starring Peter Falk. **6.25** Elvis & the Presleys. Tribute to Elvis Presley, featuring candid interviews with his ex-wife Priscilla and their daughter Lisa Marie, plus private photographs and home movies from the Presley archives, along with vintage performance material. The Presleys also offer personal insights into various aspects of Elvis's life, including his tours, time in Hollywood and personal relationships. (R) **8.05 Elvis – The 1968 Comeback Special.** The singer's classic TV special, which saw him make a return to live performance after more than eight years away, with the show featuring an array of musical set-pieces, including a jam session with his old backing band and a mini-musical. Songs include Heartbreak Hotel, Hound Dog, All Shook Up, Jailhouse Rock, Don't Be Cruel, Love Me Tender, Trouble, Can't Help Falling in Love and Gospel Medley. (R) **9.05 5 News:** Weekend. **9.15 Celebrity Big Brother.** Catching up with the celebrities as they react to Friday night's eviction, revealing how the departure has affected the remaining contestants – and whether the outcome of the public vote has anyone else fearing for their place in the competition. **10.15 CSI: Crime Scene Investigation.** New series. Julie discovers a bomb has been planted in her car, while DB gets a phone call demanding he confess to arresting the wrong man in a serial killer case. **11.15 Law & Order.** New series. Cyrus Lupo returns to New York after four years abroad, and he and Greene investigate two suicides that seem to be linked. **12.10 SuperCasing.** **3.10** Celebrity Big Brother. (R) **4.00** House Doctor. (R) **4.25** Make It Big. (R) **5.15** Angels of Jarm. (R) **5.40** Roar the Racing Car. (R)

DIGITAL

BBC Three **7.00** Great Movie Mistakes **8.00** Top Gear **9.00** Film: Eagle Eye (2008) **10.50** Family Guy **1.55** Crimis **2.25** Uncle **BBC Four** **7.00** Serengeti: Unnatural Histories **8.00** Bright Lights, Brilliant Minds: A Tale of Three Cities **9.00** Spiral **10.55** Only Yesterday, The Carpenters' Story **11.55** Duets at the BBC **12.55** Top of the Pops: 1980 **1.30** Sounds of the 70s 2: Art House Glam – Get in the Swing **2.00** Bright Lights, Brilliant Minds: A Tale of Three Cities **3.00** Only Yesterday: The Carpenters' Story **4.00** Close **ITV2** **11.15** The Cube: Celebrity Special **12.15** Film: Homeward Bound: The Incredible Journey (1993) **2.00** Funniest Ever You've Been Framed! **3.00** You've Been Framed! **4.35** Film: Nanny McPhee and the Big Bang (2010) **6.50** Film: Ocean's Thirteen (2007) **9.20** Take Me Out – The Gossip **10.05** Film: I Am Legend (2007) **12.00** Film: Couples Retreat (2009) **2.10** Totally Bonkers: Guinness World Records **2.35** Pixie Lott: The Hot Deck **2.45** Teleshopping **5.45** ITV2 Nightscreen **ITV3** **1.55** Wycliffe **3.05** Film: Carry on Loving (2013) **4.45** Agatha Christie's Marple **7.00** Doc Martin **8.00** Foyle's War **10.00** Lewis **12.05** Wycliffe **1.10** Bomb Girls **1.55** ITV3 Nightscreen **ITV4** **1.35** Africa Cup of Nations Highlights **2.35** Film: Battle of the Bulge (1965) **5.50** Storage Wars **6.45** Storage Wars: Texas **7.00** Film: Driven (2001) **10.00** Africa Cup of Nations Highlights **11.00** Film: 8 Mile (2002) **1.15** Film: South Park: Bigger, Longer & Uncut (1999) **2.35** Nitro Circus **3.00** Teleshopping **E4** **11.35** New Girl **12.30** Melissa & Joey **1.30** How I Met Your Mother **2.30** The Big Bang Theory **3.30** Bad(ish) Robots **4.30** Rude(ish) Tubs **5.30** The Big Bang Theory **8.00** The 100 **9.00** Film: Hot Tuna Machine (2010) **11.00** The Inbetweeners **12.00** How I Met Your Mother **1.10** Don't Just Be B*** in Apartment 23 **2.10** The Cleveland Show **3.15** One Tree Hill **4.00** Desperate Housewives **4.40** The Tomorrow People **Film4** **11.00** Destination Gobi (1953) **1.00** The Three Musketeers (1993) **3.05** Carry On Up the Khyber (1968) **4.50** Only You (1993) **7.00** The Accidental Spy (2001) **8.00** Hitman (2007) **10.50** In Fear (2013) **12.30** Scary Movie (2000) **2.10** Basket Case 3 (1992) **3.55** Close

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MONDAY

Mrs Miniver, BBC2, 3.05pm

A British housewife's settled existence is thrown into upheaval by the outbreak of the Second World War, as her husband and eldest son are called up and her small town is devastated by bombing. She spiritedly tries to make the best of things, looking after local children, watching over her youngest son's love life and capturing an enemy airmen. Drama based on Jan Struther's book, starring an Oscar-winning Greer Garson, with Walter Pidgeon. (1942)

TUESDAY

The Wooden Horse, BBC2, 3.35pm

British PoWs in a German camp try to escape their captors by taking up gymnastics, and using a vaulting horse to conceal the tunnel they are digging. However, even if they manage to escape the camp, the journey to neutral territory will not be an easy one. Fact-based Second World War drama, starring Leo Genn, David Tomlinson, Anthony Steel and David Greene. (1950)



Shaun of the Dead, Friday, ITV, 10.40pm

WEDNESDAY

he Mexican, BBC1, 12am

A petty crook finds himself in a tricky situation when he tries to smuggle an antique gun from Mexico into America for his mob boss. Comedy thriller directed by Gore Verbinski, with Brad Pitt, Julia Roberts, James Gandolfini, Gene Hackman and JK Simmons. (2001)

THURSDAY

Return from the River Kwai, BBC2, 3.40pm

An American pilot is shot down over Japanese-occupied Thailand. He joins a unit of guerrillas in the hope of escaping – but they end up battling to rescue a troop of starving Allied PoWs. Second World War drama sequel, starring Chris Penn, Edward Fox, Denholm Elliott, George Takei, Timothy Bottoms and Tatsuya Nakadai. (1988)

FRIDAY

Shaun of the Dead, ITV, 10.40pm

An unambitious 29-year-old man trapped in the job from hell and recently dumped decides to get his life back on track. Unfortunately, he has to put his plans on hold when zombies rise from their graves and stalk the streets of London's suburbs to feast on the living. Comedy horror, starring Simon Pegg, Nick Frost, Kit Ashfield, Dylan Moran, Lucy Davis, Bill Nighy and Penelope Wilton. (2004)

PICK OF THE WEEK

Dominic and the team are righting the wrongs

Dominic Littlewood is not a man to be messed with. Okay, sometimes his accent is so thick it sounds like he's speaking in a foreign tongue, but when it comes to catching out shifty builders, rogue traders and conmen tricksters, he certainly knows what he's doing.

It's a sad fact that there are too many instances in the country of folk being ripped off by people using forgery and fraud, although the silver lining is that surely it has to be a considerable amount fewer than 15 years ago – when Dominic first got into the television industry.

In the new series for ITV, Dominic is doing what he does best – confronting bad builders, meeting the people whose lives have been ruined by dodgy contractors, and, with the help of builder Chris Payne and designer Pippa Jameson, fixing up their homes and making them livable again.

"Bad Builders: Bang to Rights is a series where I investigate consumer complaints about bad tradesmen," Dominic explains. "It's not just about builders, it can be anyone involved in the industry, who is relied upon to sort out problems in your home."

"When we start getting complaints about a particular person or company, then I start doing some investigation

If we find they are doing things badly and they are not showing respect to people, we gather evidence and then we write to them.

We normally write to them on quite a few occasions and ask them to give us their opinion on what's been going on as obviously it's only fair to give them a right to reply and there might be a justifiable reason to why they have done what they've done."

But as confident as Dominic can be, he admits that it can be a nerve-racking situation.

When confronting these dodgy builders, he says: "You never know what's going to happen in that scenario. They could get violent, they could be threatening, they could run, argue, they could ignore you, spit at you, punch you – you never know what's going to happen."

"But for me because I know so much about them I really want to challenge them on behalf of the victims and other members of the public."

In this first programme, Dominic and the team come to the aid of pensioner Betty Hall and her son Trevor, whose house resembles a building site.

Betty was widowed seven years ago, at a similar time when son Trevor was going through a divorce, so they decided to move in together.

They settled on a ramshackle old house in Walberton, West Sussex, and employed a local building firm to help with fixing it up.

However, almost a year after work on their dream home started – after months of delays and having paid substantially more than the contract price – work ground to a halt, forcing Betty and Trevor to sack the builders – but they had to spend another £20,000 simply to make the house liveable. But Dominic finds them living in terrible conditions, with no central heating or a fully functioning kitchen, with incomplete bedrooms and bathrooms.

As Pippa and Chris set about getting neighbours and friends involved in transforming the house in two weeks, can Dominic get answers from the builders responsible?



Bad Builders – Bang to Rights, Tuesday, ITV, 8pm

BEST OF THE REST

MONDAY

Broadchurch

ITV, 9pm

Last week, Hardy faced a race against time as Ellie discovered a startling new piece of evidence, forcing them to reassess their suspicions. Now, as the acclaimed mystery drama reaches the halfway point, Miller is struggling to control her sister Lucy amid family tensions, Alec must confront his demons, and Mark Latimer has to make a decision. Viewers can expect many more twists and turns as the story builds toward a dramatic conclusion. David Tennant and Olivia Colman star.

Catastrophe

Channel 4, 10pm

First episodes of sitcoms rarely go down well with audiences – Fawlty Towers received an extraordinary amount of criticism when it first aired, and yet is now regarded as a classic. So it's unusual for one to hit the ground running – which is why Sharon Horgan and Rob Delaney deserve plenty of plaudits after last week's great opening edition. It introduced us to the characters they've both created and play who, funny enough, called Sharon and Rob. Well, at least they won't get confused. This time around, pregnant Sharon is trying hard to get to grips with the idea of Rob living with her – and her brother Fergal isn't exactly helping the situation.

TUESDAY

Touched by Auschwitz

BBC2, 9pm

Feature-length documentary marking the 70th anniversary of the liberation of the concentration camp by Red Army troops. Laurence Rees travels to Jerusalem, Chicago, London, Bavaria, Krakow and Tel Aviv to talk to six survivors, along with their friends and families, who discuss the problems, challenges and triumphs they have experienced since the end of the Second World War. Among those interviewed are Tadeusz, who became a doctor but still had to fight persecution by communists in Poland, and Hermann, who went on to become a successful antiques dealer in Bavaria, but still suffers from recurring nightmares.

Paul O'Grady's Animal Orphans

ITV, 9pm

The comedian and animal lover continues on his mission to help hand-rear animals orphaned in the wild across South Africa, Namibia and Zambia, and this week he gets a welcome blast from the past. Viewers may recall last year's first series, which saw Paul help adorable elephant calf Nkala. Well, during tonight's instalment of his latest trip, he's reunited with his old friend.

WEDNESDAY

Midsummer Murders

ITV, 8pm

New series. Return of the long-running mystery drama, starring Neil Dudgeon and Gwilym Lee. At the Luxton Deeping Crime Festival, the unveiling of a newly discovered novel by deceased Midsummer crime writer George Summersbee is jeopardised when the manuscript is stolen and local artist Suzie Colebrooke is electrocuted by a booby-trapped roulette wheel. Can new father Barnaby untangle a web of jealousy and find the killer?

Wolf Hall

BBC2, 9pm

Anne Boleyn summons Cromwell, anxious to know whether she has an ally in him, and he witnesses her venting her frustrations on her ladies-in-waiting. The king starts to take notice of Cromwell and comes to rely on the lawyer's advice, but then news arrives from York that Cardinal Wolsey has been arrested by Harry Percy, a vengeful act for denying his betrothal to Anne.

Midsummer Murders, Wednesday, ITV, 8pm

THURSDAY

Eat Well for Less

BBC1, 8pm

New series. MasterChef judge Gregg Wallace and greengrocer Chris Bavin set out to help families with their food shopping, showing them simple and effective ways to save money on their current bill. First up are the Booths from Lancashire. Mum Jenny claims to be cautious at the supermarket, always looking out for the best deals, but dad Howard's impulse buys mean they always end up paying more than they should. Now they want to save £40 a week so they can build a home extension.

FRIDAY

The Musketeers

BBC1, 9pm

The king sends the swordsmen to talk to prophet Emile of Duras, who is raising an army to march on Spain as a result of visions she claims to have received from God. It's clear she and her followers pose a danger, and as anti-Spanish riots begin, Aramis is chosen to return to her camp and discredit the woman – before she pushes France into an ill-timed war with its neighbouring country. Meanwhile, Rochefort continues to clash with Ambassador Perales, and resorts to blackmail and murder to resolve the problem.

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Thu 26th	Nifty 50's Mystery Lunch Excursion (Every Last Thursday of the Month)	£23	£23	-	G

MARCH

Sun 22nd	*Buy a Gift for Mother's Day * Afternoon Tea at the Chateau Impney Hotel and Webs Garden Centre * Mother's Day Special Gift *	£25	£25	£20	G
Thu 26th	Nifty 50's Mystery Lunch Excursion (Every Last Thursday of the Month)	£23	£23	-	H
Sun 29th - Thu 2nd	DISNEYLAND PARIS * 4 NIGHTS BB WITH 3 DAY HOPPER TICKET * Kids Stay FREE*	From £289	From £289	£89	-

APRIL

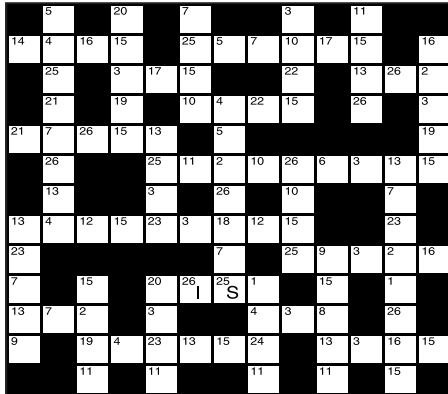
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Sun 5th	West Midland Safari Park Entrance + Coach+ All Inclusive Ticket (Entrance, Coach + ride Wristband) *	£18	£17	£16	E
Mon 6th	Weston-Super-Mare on Easter Monday * EASTER SPECIAL * ALL SEATS ONLY £11.00	£11	£11	£11	B
Wed 8th	Drayton Manor Theme Park Coach + Ticket* 2-3 Yrs £1 - THOMAS LAND	£30	£30	£30	D
Thu 9th	Kedleston Hall (Derbyshire) NEW *Nifty National Trust Coach Club*	£25	£25	-	D
Tue 14th	Bicester Shopping Village & Oxford 2 For Tuesday 2 SEATS FOR £25	£15	£14	-	C
Wed 15th	Nifty 50's Mystery Lunch-on-the-River...? NEW *MYSTERY LUNCH SPECIAL*	£28	£28	-	C
Sat 18th	Liverpool - Nifty City Explorer Tour *Includes Hop On Hop Off Open-Top Bus Ticket*	£29	£27	£25	B
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Codeword

Each number in the grid represents a different letter of the alphabet and every letter of the alphabet is used. Use the given letter(s) to the right of the main grid to start you off.



LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13
A	T	C	N	W	P	F	R	M	K	S	V	O
14	15	16	17	18	19	20	21	22	23	24	25	26
I	Y	J	B	E	Q	X	L	D	H	G	Z	U

Quiz

1. Which member of Mrs Thatcher's cabinet was a former airline pilot?
2. Which tree's Latin name is *Juglans regia*?
3. Who plays Woody Allen's wife in *Manhattan Murder Mystery*?
4. How do we know the rich vitamin B source *Saccharomyces cerevisiae*?
5. Which organisation was founded by Chad Varah in 1953?
6. By what name is the Fairs Cup now known?
7. What are studied by palaeontologists?
8. Which martial art uses bamboo replicas of samurai swords?
9. Which Scotland Yard detective led the hunt for Ronnie Biggs?
10. Which US state's capital is Springfield?

Double Crossword

Choose either quick or cryptic clues - both fit the same grid.

Cryptic Clues:

Across

1. Nowhere near being unapproachable (6)
4. Fits and starts (6)
9. A seat not in sun provided in a moment (13)
10. One would feel put out to be treated so (7)
11. Leaps into indiscretion (5)
12. Support the employees (5)
14. Written in a lofty pedantic style (5)
18. Free from fault (5)
19. Assimilates summaries (7)
21. A refreshing movement in the air (7,6)
22. Pete gets round it, being small (6)
23. Stays to give personal support (6)
1. Was abusive, yet guarded? (6)
2. Sent the application off too late to get the appointment? (6,3,4)
3. It's drunk to a saint (5)
5. Fine kick on the football field (7)
6. The ultimate in intelligence (4-5,4)
7. She won't be the only child in the ward (6)
8. Room could easily become dusty (5)
13. His fancies rarely last (7)
15. Domestic storm centre (3-3)
16. Present day maxim (5)
17. Rising, like foreign currency (6)
20. Film actress in the dress circle (5)

Down

1. Was abusive, yet guarded? (6)
2. Sent the application off too late to get the appointment? (6,3,4)
3. It's drunk to a saint (5)
5. Fine kick on the football field (7)
6. The ultimate in intelligence (4-5,4)
7. She won't be the only child in the ward (6)
8. Room could easily become dusty (5)
13. His fancies rarely last (7)
15. Domestic storm centre (3-3)
16. Present day maxim (5)
17. Rising, like foreign currency (6)
20. Film actress in the dress circle (5)

Sudoku

		6	5	1
5	1	2	3	7
6	8			2 3
9		4		2
	4		2	3
1	3		6	4
2			1	5
	7		5 9	8
4		7		9

Fill in the grid below so that every column, every row and each of the 3×3 boxes contains all the digits from 1 to 9.

LAST WEEK'S SOLUTION

2	3	9	6	4	8	5	7
5	8	7	2	3	1	4	6
1	6	4	9	7	5	2	8
8	4	2	5	1	7	3	9
3	1	6	8	2	9	7	4
9	7	5	4	6	3	8	1
6	2	3	7	9	4	1	5
4	9	8	1	5	2	6	3
7	5	1	3	8	6	9	2

LAST WEEK'S CROSSWORD SOLUTIONS:
 CRYPTIC - Across: 1 Pitch and toss; 7 Towns; 8 Alone; 9 Tot; 10 Sleep well; 11 Errata; 12 Detain; 15 Entertain; 17 El; 18 Attic; 19 Kneel; 21 Red letter day; 24 Down: 1 Polythene bag; 2 How; 3 Nested; 4 Trample on; 5 Score; 6 Well on his way; 7 Tutor; 10 Satirical; 13 Agent; 14 Packet; 16 Tithe; 20 Eve. QUICK - Across: 1 Circumstance; 7 Tenor; 8 Robin; 9 Eye; 10 Emergence; 11 Putrid; 12 Stress; 15 Unsettled; 17 Tin; 18 Union; 19 Glory; 21 Invertebrate. Down: 1 Contemptuous; 2 Urn; 3 Street; 4 Abrogated; 5 Cabin; 6 Unreasonable; 7 Treat; 10 Existence; 13 Entry; 14 Plicht; 16 Scion; 20 Orb.

Niner

Each number from 1 to 9 represents a different letter. Solve the clues and insert the letters in the appropriate squares to discover a word which uses all nine letters.

159 gives a bird,
67284 gives another bird,
1235 gives an animal.

1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9
---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---	---

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Halesowen Office Lettings & Property Management



HALESOWEN, Newton Court £800 pcm+fees
A recently converted 3 bedroom ground floor apartment finished to an extremely high standard and centrally located with commuter links to Halesowen and Birmingham. Featuring 2 double bedrooms, both with fitted wardrobes, 2 bathrooms, 1 single bedroom, 2 extra rooms downstairs, secondary glazing throughout. Allocated parking. Viewings recommended. EPC: G

HALESOWEN, Stourbridge Road £750 pcm+fees
Well presented 3 bedroom semi detached house with large driveway for multiple cars in this very popular residential area. Entrance hall leading to large living room/dining area, fitted kitchen, large private rear garden with open fields at the top, 3 bedrooms, family bathroom and garage. EPC: E



OLDBURY, Broadway £725 pcm+fees
A large extended traditional link-detached house in a quiet cul-de-sac. Entrance porch leading to entrance hall, large through lounge/dining area, study/playroom, superb bathroom with 'P' shaped bath & shower over, 3 double bedrooms, large rear garden, driveway to front for 2 cars. EPC: E

HALESOWEN, Hadon Hill Road £695 pcm+fees
Fully refurbished to a very high standard 3 bedroom detached house close to Halesowen Town Centre. This lovely property has a reception room, brand new fitted kitchen with oven/hob, dining room with patio doors leading to a private rear garden, upstairs are 2 double bedrooms & 1 single, brand new fitted family bathroom with shower. Driveway for 2 cars. EPC: TBC

HALESOWEN, Melburne Road £695 pcm+fees
Within walking distance to Halesowen, is this 3 story town house. Well worth an inspection inside and set within a quiet cul-de-sac, comprising of: 3 bedrooms, large fitted dining kitchen, very large lounge, downstairs wc, house bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, off road parking for 2 cars and garage, close to local schools and college. EPC: E



DUDLEY, Tansley Hill Road £650 pcm+fees
A wonderful family home, situated in a lovely quiet backwater cul-de-sac, enjoying far reaching views to the rear of the property. While traditional in style, this home is modern throughout and benefits from double glazing. The property very attractive accommodation. There is a driveway for 2 cars, large rear garden with a detached storage room. Viewing is highly recommended to appreciate the setting this delightful property is situated within. EPC: D

ROWLEY REGIS, Spring Vale Road £650 pcm+fees
1 MONTHS RENT HALF PRICE! An opportunity to acquire a well maintained 3 bedroom detached property situated in a popular residential area. Located in a quiet cul-de-sac, close to local schools and college. Features a large living room, fitted kitchen with a double range cooker, 2 double & 1 single bedroom/study, bathroom with shower, driveway/garage. A lovely property not to be missed. Minimum contract 12 months. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, West Road £625 pcm+fees
A lovely 3 bedroom traditional semi-detached house in this popular location for Colley Lane Primary School and the local bus route. Features a large lounge, dining room, kitchen, double glazing, double garage, front & rear gardens. Available now. EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Toys Lane £625 pcm+fees
A refurbished large detached house ideal for shops and the number 9 bus. Featuring 3 double bedrooms, 2 reception rooms, large fitted kitchen, large bathroom with white suite and shower. Gas central heating, double glazed, small back garden and driveway for 1 car. EPC: TBC

HALESOWEN, Haden Hill Road £625 pcm+fees
A great size house close to Halesowen and buses, to Halesowen and Cradley Heath just outside. This home features 2 reception rooms, dining kitchen, downstairs w.c. 3 good size bedrooms, bathroom with separate shower. Benefits also include gas central heating, front and rear gardens, garage, driveway. Available immediately. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, Woodland Road £550 pcm+fees
Traditional style 3 bedroom mid terraced house. Lounge, hallway, modern kitchen, Utility room, downstairs bathroom, 2 double & 1 single bedroom, gas central heating. Private rear garden, on road parking. Available immediately. EPC: D



HALESOWEN, Elmtree Grove £550 pcm+fees
A 3 bedroom semi-detached dormer bungalow in a quiet residential area and close to Colley Lane Primary School, number 9 bus route and Halesowen. Featuring 3 double bedrooms (one downstairs), living room, fitted kitchen, gas central heating, double glazed, new carpets throughout, small private garden, garage and driveway. EPC: F

BARTLEY GREEN, Wolverley Road £525 pcm+fees
A spacious mid terraced house in a sought after location and close to local shops. Featuring a fitted breakfast kitchen, through lounge/dining room, 3 good size bedrooms, bathroom with shower (New bathroom to be fitted) with a separate toilet. Benefits include rear garden. Convenient location for Birmingham. On road parking. EPC: D

HALESOWEN, Ladysmith Road £525 pcm+fees
A beautiful mid terrace house in a sought after area for Colley Lane Primary School, bus links to Halesowen and Stourbridge. This house features 2 reception rooms, modern fitted kitchen, 2 good size bedrooms, family bathroom with shower, double glazing, gas central heating, rear garden. A property not to be missed! EPC: TBC



HALESOWEN, Wicklow Close £525 pcm+fees
A well presented modern 2 bedroom ground floor apartment on the very popular Squirrels estate, Halesowen. The property has a modern fitted kitchen, lounge with open plan kitchen, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower. Private large garden & garage is located in a separate block. A lovely property which is available now! EPC: E

HALESOWEN, Wright Street £495 pcm+fees
Close to Halesowen Town Centre and Tenterfields Primary School. This end terrace home features gas central heating, double glazing, double garage, 2 double bedrooms, bathroom with shower, rear garden, on road parking. Available now. Short term let for 6 months, possibly longer. EPC: E

ROWLEY REGIS, The Grange £450 pcm+fees
Located within minutes of Blackheath Town Centre. This lovely unfurnished ground floor apartment features electric storage heating, open plan living room/fitted kitchen, 1 double bedroom, bathroom with shower, allocated parking space. EPC: C



CRADLEY HEATH, Victoria Gardens £425 pcm+fees
A modern top floor apartment, in the centre of Old Hill with local bus stop outside and Old Hill train station close by. This apartment comprises of 1 double bedroom, electric storage heating, double glazing, fitted kitchen, bathroom with shower, allocated parking, unfurnished. EPC: C

CRADLEY HEATH, Upper High Street £375 pcm+fees
Modern 1st floor flat close to Cradley Heath train station & all bus routes. Featuring an open plan lounge/fitted kitchen with appliances, hallway to 1 double bedroom, bathroom suite with shower, electric central heating, communal garden to rear of property, on road parking. Available early February. Only 6 months security deposit and 1 months rent in advance. EPC: G

HALESOWEN, Somers Road £375 pcm+fees
A 1 bedroom first floor apartment offering generous accommodation including: lounge with open plan kitchen, bedroom with en-suite shower room, double glazing, communal garden, on road parking, unfurnished. EPC: G

PROPERTY

Three homes converted into a spacious cottage

SPINDLE Cottage at Dayhouse Bank, Romsley, near Halesowen, is a charming and spacious family home.

Believed to date back to the 1870s it was once three nailers cottages. It is for sale through Andrew Grant at £379,950. Many rooms have countryside views.

At the heart of the home is an open plan kitchen/dining/living area with appliances including a range cooker plus solid oak worktops. The drawing room is elegant, with an open fire. A second sitting room would make a lovely home office/teenagers den. There is also a hallway and laundry/WC. Upstairs are three double bedrooms and a large family bathroom. A driveway leads to a double garage and there are gardens with decking.

Contact Andrew Grant on 01527 579977 or visit www.an-drewgrant.co.uk website.



Five-bedroomed detached

SPACIOUS five-bedroomed detached house, The Lawley, Halesowen, is at the head of a cul-de-sac on a popular development called 'The Squirrels'.

It is for sale through Hicks Hadley at £279,950 with no chain. With gas central heating and double glazing it has a spacious lounge with fireplace, fitted dining kitchen with range cooker, cupboard, utility, WC, conservatory, bedroom one with cupboards, two bathrooms. There is a garage and garden. Call 01562 510440 or see www.hickshadley.com



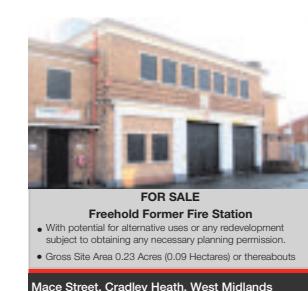
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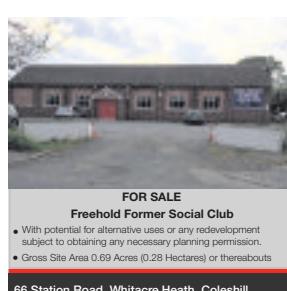
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Milestone show at NEC

By Tony Adams

The 2015 motorsport season is off to a flying start as stars, cars and action descended on Birmingham's NEC for a sell-out Autosport International Show.

Celebrating its 25th anniversary, Autosport is Europe's biggest dedicated motorsport show and attracted motoring fans of all ages and several celebrities including F1 star David Coulthard, World Endurance champion Anthony Davidson, Le Mans winner Alan McNish, World Rallycross champion Petter Solberg and British Touring Car champion Colin Turkington.

Midlands companies reported a suc-

cessful event with current touring car driver Matt Neal of West Bromwich-based Team Dynamics answering questions on the Rimstock Wheels stand, commenting: "Autosport at the NEC provided a great platform for the industry to kick the year off in style, with old and brand new cars and products alongside engineering expertise being showcased that we can truly boast about in the UK."

"We were delighted that high visitor numbers provided quality interest and potential future sales leads for Rimstock as an exhibitor."

Fantastic

Telford-based Cobra Seats was also displaying its products at the show and managing director Mark Dunsford said: "Autosport genuinely was a fantastic show and the best one we've done in the 15-plus years of exhibiting."

"We spent the Thursday and Friday trade days meeting well-established and new professional drivers, old friends, clients and generally networking, which itself proved very fruitful."

"We signed a good number of deals for professional drivers to use our seats in a wide range of disciplines, so we should have no less than 11 cars in the British Touring Cars Championship using Cobra Seats for 2015, including this year's championship winning team, West Surrey Racing with 2014 champion Colin Turkington."

"Then, at the weekend, we engaged with our public customer base old and new and spent valuable time showing them what we have developed at our Telford factory, and helping them with their specific needs for this year's events, ranging from grass roots



'We signed a good number of deals for professional drivers to use our seats'

stage and club rallying through to marine, speed and race events."

Various car clubs had stands with volunteer members on hand to offer advice and information on making the most of prized classic and sports cars.

Pride of place in the Performance Car section went to Radio 2 DJ Chris Evans' La Ferrari, worth a cool £1.6 million, and Lewis Hamilton's F1 title-winning Mercedes AMG Petronas F1 car led the line-up on the F1 grid display.

Other trade stands encouraged visitor participation with several competitions for race driving game simulators and a timed F1-style wheel-change challenge.

Pictured above: Matt Neal (right) with colleague Justin Pugh on the Rimstock stand.

Pictured left: Tina Reeves, from Cobra Seats, with Aston Villa and Manchester United dug-out seats on the Cobra stand.



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Postal applications to:

MARTIN WRIGHT

EDITOR

SHROPSHIRE STAR

KETLEY

TELFORD TF1 5HU

by January 26.

Classified Ads

8

Motoring

cars over £1500

CITROEN XSARA Picasso deluxe diesel, 03, reg. 65,000 miles. £5,950. 01902 741156.

FIAT GRANDE PUNTO 2006, 71,881 miles, blue metallic, electric windows, air con, alarm, MoT, central locking, pas, stereo, CD, very good condition. £1,650 o.n.o. 07821 928732.

FORD KA 2007, 33,500 miles, sea grey, electric windows, air bag, abs, long MoT, central locking, one owner, £2,500. 000. 07757 273069.

MUST BE SEEN

MERCEDES C180 SE AUTO KOMPRESSOR COUPE Petrol, 54 plate. 6 months MoT, FSH. 124,000 miles. Blue. Cream Leather interior. Good runner. Reliable. Used daily. £3,000 o.n.o. 07958 103783. Wolverhampton.

MUST BE SEEN

MITSUBISHI CZ2 AMT, 2006, 37,144 miles, blue, MoT, excellent condition, £2,895. 000. 07475 396855.

RENAULT KANGOO AUTHENTIC 2004, wheelchair access, 16V, 1149cc, petrol, 21,000 miles. £2,300. 000. 01562 745080.

VAUXHALL VECTRA 2008 plate, petrol, navy, fsh, 71,000 miles, nine months MoT, three lady owners, £2,350. 07890 387533.

MUST BE SEEN

VW GOLF FOX 1.4i 59 plate, black, immaculate condition, 39,000 miles, serviced, excellent interior, MoT, good tyres, sports seats. £3,500. 07867 423274.

VW GOLF GT TDI 130 03 low miles, 1 previous owner, FSH, heated seats, all usual extras. Superb condition. £2,850. 000. 07976 583291.

VW POLO 1.2 (64bhp) 06 56, 5-dr. 67K, in red, CL, CD, abs, SH, recent service and MoT, low ins. £3,100. 07759 237779 / 01384 258061.

cars under £1500

ADVERTISERS ARE REMINDED that the Business Advertisements (Disclosure) Order of 1977 requires that advertisements must clearly differentiate between Private and Trade.

FIAT PUNTO ACTIVE SPORT 1.2 16V, 2003, 53 plate, 94,000 miles, 12 months MoT. £850. Codsall area. 07755 901378.

HYUNDAI COUPE T Reg, 32,000 miles, 3 owners, automatic, 10 months MoT, £700 o.n.o. 01902 659047.

NISSAN MICRA 1998, Automatic 11 months MoT, 99k, import so has AC, EM, EW front/back, 1000cc, £750. 000. 07572 236800.

RENAULT KANGOO van, 880DTi, 1870cc, 9 months MoT, £400. 01902 836709.

ROVER 45 CLUB SE 1.4, 05 reg 28,400 miles, new engine, tyres, 5 months MoT, 1000cc, £700. 000. 07854 846147.

TOYOTA YARIS 2003, 87,600 miles, blue, electric windows, air bag, sh, MoT, central locking, sunroof, 2 alloys, stereo, CD, colour coded. £1,400. 000. 07849 623117.

VAUXHALL CORSA COMFORT 2001, 69,900 miles, green, fsh, 6 months MoT, metallic paint, central locking, sunroof, 2 owners. £550. 000. 07722 566428.

commercial vehicles

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JAGUAR XK8 1998 S reg, family owned from new, under 50k miles, silver, new MoT, £5,750. 000. 405413 or 07900 04107.

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9 Local Information

LEGAL / PUBLIC NOTICES For convenience you may fax any advertising requirements to **Marie Hogg** on **01902 713146** or email **marie.hogg@expressandstar.co.uk** (remember to include a name/contact number for confirmation of receipt)

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personal



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- Single rooms subject to availability - supplement applies

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Three days departing July 3

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- Return coach travel
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- Entrance to Jimmy's Farm
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Organised by Diamond Holidays (ABTA W0552)

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Heading south to Mostar see the 16th century mosques, turkish houses, the fine 19th century town hall plus the amazing reconstructed bridge, linking the two halves of the old town.

Dubrovnik is a beautiful baroque city with huge imposing ramparts. The main avenue is completely paved with marble and throughout the city there is a wonderful array of monasteries, decorated churches and civic buildings dating from the 14th century.

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Organised by Riviera Travel (ABTA V4744, ATOL 3430)

Runners among medals at stadium

IT was a good weekend for athletes from Dudley Kingswinford Running Club as they were among the medals.

They were competing in the Midland Masters Cross Country Championships at Aldersley Stadium.

In an event restricted to runners over 35 you'd expect the pace to be slower and the event to be less competitive than the normal Birmingham League but that was certainly not the case in a race full of quality.

The course was a mixture of ankle deep mud, rock hard icy patches and plenty in between with numerous twists and turns over the 8km distance.

In a race won by Mark Couldwell of Charnwood AC in 24.44 from Scott Hazel of Coventry Godiva in 24.55 and Stuart Hawkes of Amazing Feet in 25.14, James Wright was first back for the blue hoops in 28th place in 29.57 placing 5th in the M35 category.

Gary Bonner was 31st in 30.22 and 5th M50, Dave Norman was 35th in 31.09 and 9th M40, Graham Wildgoose was 45th in 33.27 an 9th M45 and John Andrews was 47th in 36.14 and 11th M40. The club took bronze.

Fears of £2m fraud at Blues

THE company that owns Birmingham City FC said it believes a former employee may have "misappropriated" £2.5m.

Birmingham International Holdings said it had reported the matter to the Hong Kong police.

The company said the loss "may have a material impact on the operation and financial situation of the group".

It was also concerned that the matter was apparently missed by auditors.

Shares in the Hong Kong-based company were suspended six weeks ago and will not resume trading until further notice.

BIH said it would consider setting up an investigation committee

Old Hales overwhelmed after good start

Old Patesians 39

Old Halesonians 2nds 10

OLD Hales travelled down to Cheltenham to face a strong Old Pats side and scored first when a kick and chase down field led to Old Pats losing possession.

The visitors capitalised on this by moving the ball to the left to release wing James Mitchell who, with little room to work with, used his superior pace to glide past the Old Pats defence and score.

Old Pats regained possession from the kick off and immediately put pressure on Old Hales. The visitors became frustrated with some of the refereeing decisions but

Rugby

Pats stayed focused and forced their way over for two tries in quick succession.

Hales tried to get back into the game but Pats had the upper hand and stretched their opponents defence to score two further tries.

Old Hales started the second half with some renewed vigour and moved the ball quickly. Mike Topping featured regularly in attacking moves gaining good ground. Unfortunately from one of the attacks, cen-

tre Oli Kealey suffered a knee injury. After prolonged treatment from the Pats physiotherapists, Oli left the field in a leg brace and was taken to hospital with suspected ligament damage.

Shortly after the restart, the ball popped out from a Pats scrum and the scrum half made good ground before passing to the supporting fullback who went over to score.

At a lineout, Hales hooker, Bobby Moxon, received a yellow card for illegally taking out the Pats scrum half. The home side made the most of the one man advantage and scored two tries from long range.

With only minutes remaining Hales at-

tacked from deep, with the ball passing through the hands of Topping, Liam Kendrick and Dave Wakefield before reaching James Mitchell on the halfway line. Once again Mitchell used his pace to beat two players and the cover defence to score in the corner for the final score.

Kings Norton 2nds 23 Old Halesonians

3rds/4ths 41

Due to Old Hales postponing the league game against Malvern because of a waterlogged pitch, a game was arranged away against Kings Norton 2nds.

Old Hales ran out winners, scoring seven tries against Kings Norton's three.

Club ends swim with second placing

HALESOWEN swimmers travelled to Redditch for the first round of the Worcester Winter League on Saturday January 17 knowing they were facing tough opponents.

This was the first gala of 2015 for the team and with several swimmers rested ahead of important competitions early in the year, those stepping in grabbed the opportunity with both hands to produce a strong result for the team and to record personal best performances.

It was clear from the outset that Redditch were the team to beat and Halesowen swimmers fought hard throughout to close the gap.

Despite some excellent swims the team had to settle for runners-up.

Individual winners were Lauren Hill in the Butterfly, Amber Harrison in the Breaststroke and Jacob Darby in the Freestyle.

The age 13 and under medley relay team grabbed a victory including India Hanke, Paige Robbins, Owen Crump, Robert Jennings and Euan Vaughan Hawkins.

Final scores were Redditch A 212, Halesowen 175, Pershore 166, Oldbury 140, Perry Beeches & SSS 95.

Albion happy with point from Toffees

Everton 0 Albion 0

THERE was nothing for Albion fans to get excited about at Goodison Park.

But there was something to celebrate as Tony Pulis's side claimed a very handy point from a tenacious display on Merseyside. And while there was little to get the travelling fans off their seats, they could at least smile that – for once – the boot was on the other foot.

For this time it was friction in the opposition camp that made the headlines as Kevin Mirallas's missed penalty grabbed all the attention.

And for a change it was the opposing manager at odds with his fans as the home faithful turned on Roberto Martinez.

On the national stage, Albion could enjoy their evening as the support act.

But those who follow the Baggies more closely will have been delighted at the spirit, organisation and discipline on show, even if worries remain about the dearth of pace and flair in the ranks.

With Claudio Yacob immense in midfield and Joleon Lescott and Gareth McAuley excellent at the back, they soaked up pressure and earned their point.

In a scrappy opening, the only incident of note came off the field as, on the 13th anniversary of his death, Albion fans' now traditional applause for legend Jeff Astle took on extra poignancy.

Fans of Everton – the club against whom 'The King' netted his most famous goal – joined in sportingly. Moments earlier they

had seen left-back Leighton Baines try his luck with a long-range effort that Ben Foster in the Albion goal dealt with easily.

The Baggies were pinned back for long spells with leading scorer Saido Berahino deployed out wide and asked to track Everton full-back Seamus Coleman, leaving him operating as an auxiliary left-back for much of the time.

It meant the Baggies, and Berahino in particular, were worryingly deep.

But one long clearance from the striker did spark a rare attack for the visitors midway through the half.

There was controversy just before the break, however, as Lescott was penalised for handball.

But Mirallas grabbed the ball ahead of regular taker Baines and drilled his penalty wide of Foster's right-hand post. The Belgian did not re-emerge for the second half.

The hosts should have gone in front with 15 minutes left but Lukaku leaned back as he shot and fired high and wide when he should have hit the target.

No end in sight for DK's losses misery



Liam Marshall powers forward on his way to scoring the only try for DK against Bromsgrove

DK 5 Bromsgrove 42

AFTER 47 minutes, DK forced a lineout deep inside the Bromsgrove 22.

A ball to the middle was expertly deflected into Kieran Pinches' hands by skipper Pete Knight.

The ball flashed across the DK three quarter line and Liam Marshall beat his man leaving him with 10 metres to go, and with the Bromsgrove cover defence on hand.

However, it was not enough, be-

cause despite the attentions of two Bromsgrove defenders, Marshall powered to the line carrying them with him for the last few metres and taking the ball over for the only DK try of the match.

DK were on the scoreboard.

This proved to be a watershed for the DK squad where they should really have taken hold of the game.

However, instead of narrowing the gap while their opponent was down

to 10 men, Bromsgrove eased away with the game to record a 42-5 victory over struggling DK club.

The pick of their second half tries came from their full back, who splintered the DK defence.

The Bromsgrove victory reflected the way that the game panned out particularly in the second half.

Although, the big difference between the sides was the ability to take advantage of field position...

Boukari is hit by more injury woe

LUCKLESS Razak Boukari has suffered yet another injury blow – as Scott Bourne returns to contention at Wolves.

The £2.5m winger has a groin strain and will be out for up to three weeks.

Boukari was due to make his comeback with Bourne in today's visit of Brentford to Compton, postponed in any event due to a frozen pitch.

"Boukari has a groin strain which he did last Friday and will be out for two to three weeks," said head coach Kenny Jackett.

"He's picked up a lot of injuries. I haven't been able to give him a chance yet and would like to give him an opportunity. But keeping him fit has been tough."

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Whiley pulls in doubles trophy

HALESOWEN'S Jordanne Whiley has gained her first wheelchair tennis trophy of 2015.

She partnered Japan's Yui Kamiji to win finish runners-up in the women's doubles at the Sydney International Open, the first of six Super Series events.

The winners of all four Grand Slam doubles titles in 2014, Whiley and Kamiji dropped just one game en route to the final in Sydney before being edged out in three sets by Dutch duo Jiske Griffioen and Aniek van Koot.

Kamiji and Whiley beat Griffioen and van Koot in either a third and final set or a deciding championship tie-break in their finals at Roland Garros, Wimbledon and the US Open in New York last year.

Although Kamiji and Whiley took their opponents to a decider one again, Griffioen and van Koot just had the edge this time and clinched a 6-4, 1-6, 6-4 victory as Whiley and Kamiji finished runners-up in Sydney for the second successive year.

The two partnerships could meet again at the Australian Open at Melbourne Park on 28 to 31 January.

"Obviously I am disappointed that we lost the final, neither Yui nor I played like we can."

Bennett hints at Villa exit

JOE BENNETT has suggested he may be open to leaving Aston Villa permanently for Brighton.

Bennett has struggled to establish himself at Villa since joining in 2012 and could be forced to look elsewhere for first-team football.

The 24-year-old left-back is on loan at the Championship strugglers and has discussed the potential for a longer-term agreement.

"I've got another year left (on my Villa contract), so there might be a fee involved," said Bennett, who has made 30 appearances for Paul Lambert's side. "I'll keep my options open but I think it is a possibility I could come here permanently."

"The main thing is that you are happy as a player. When you are happy off the pitch you are going to be playing the best you can."

Old Hales dig deep to keep hold of win

Old Halesonians 23
Peterborough Lions 16

OLD Hales came into this game with an unconvincing win against Sutton last week when they failed to dominate.

Injuries to stalwart Tom Jordan and Nigel Burrows saw Loz Breese and Jay Martin completing the back row with player/coach Mark Evans.

This became a deciding factor in this game against a dominant forward display initially by the visitors. After seven minutes Hales showed immediate stability in the scrum with props Louis Padian, Rich Tay-

Rugby

lor and hooker Pete Fitzgerald providing a solid scrum for the backs to work from.

Immediate pressure from the Hales side led to a penalty on the visitors 22. Full back Chris Hooper took it quickly and fed to flanker Loz Breese for his first try of the game.

The next period of play saw the Lions fight back twice. Hales gave away two simple penalties which Carrington converted for the visitors.

Hales again came back with some excellent forwards and backs combinations. Scrum Half Nathan Jones and fly half Gareth Bow provided ample ball to the Hales backs. Hooper and Carl Robinson were always a threat and wing Warren Oliver making telling runs into the visiting defence.

On 20 minutes pressure forced a penalty which Hooper converted. After 27 minutes Peterborough were reduced to 14 men for foul play, Hales should have capitalised on this but the visitors stood strong.

Oliver collected a high kick on the half way line and set off on a run outside the op-

More misery

No end in sight to DK's losing streak

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Tipton close to upset

Long Eaton 2 Tipton 1

TIPTON came close to producing an unlikely result as they ignored the length of the Midland League Premier Division table.

Leaders Long Eaton squeezed home 2-1 against the bottom-placed Black Country outfit, with a point-blank save by home keeper Cameron Mason denying Tipton's Simon Badianne a last-gasp equaliser.

Long Eaton took the lead in 20 minutes when Brad Wells guided home an inch perfect cross from TJ Nightingale.

Tipton rocked Long Eaton in the 57th minute, however, when Ben Hadley adroitly skipped through the home rearguard to plant the ball past a startled Mason and bring the sides level.

Long Eaton were then reduced to 10 men when Wells was shown his second yellow card, and Sean Pugh had a great opportunity to put the visitors in front, but turned his close-range effort over the bar.

Almost immediately Long Eaton restored their advantage, Kieran Wells this time on target.

Badianne came close to salvaging a precious point.

Weather stops Baggies match

ALBION saw their Birmingham Senior Cup clash at Hednesford Town postponed on Tuesday night.

As a result of deteriorating weather conditions, the match referee called off the game shortly before kick-off. Hednesford were due to go to AFC Fylde on Saturday but will play a rescheduled match at Worcester City.

The Chronicle, a Midland News Association Ltd publication, printed by the company at Ketley, Telford. Thursday, January 22

Tribute was a special moment, says Bath



Captain Danny Bath and academy player Caden Voice with a wreath to mark the death of Sir Jack Hayward which he placed behind the goal before the match against Blackpool at Molineux

WOLVES captain Danny Bath said laying a wreath in memory of Sir Jack Hayward, before Saturday's emotional win over Blackpool, was a "special moment" for him.

The centre-back placed the flowers next to the goal at the former North Bank end of Molineux, accompanied by under-eights academy player Caden Voice, as Wolves paid tribute to their former owner.

And Bath said: "It was sad for

everyone to lose someone like Sir Jack and I think the community of Wolverhampton came out in force to show what he meant. It was a great tribute from everyone before the game to mark a great man and all the service he has given both to the club and the community.

"It was a fitting tribute and just what he deserves and for me to lay the wreath was a special moment.

"That was a time when players and

fans of both clubs put the football to one side for a minute and everyone paid their respects."

Late goals from Dave Edwards and new boy Benik Afobe ensured Wolves honoured Sir Jack's memory with a 2-0 win.

"We knew that Blackpool would come and set up like they did and make it difficult for us," said Bath.

"It is never easy to play a team down the bottom."

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